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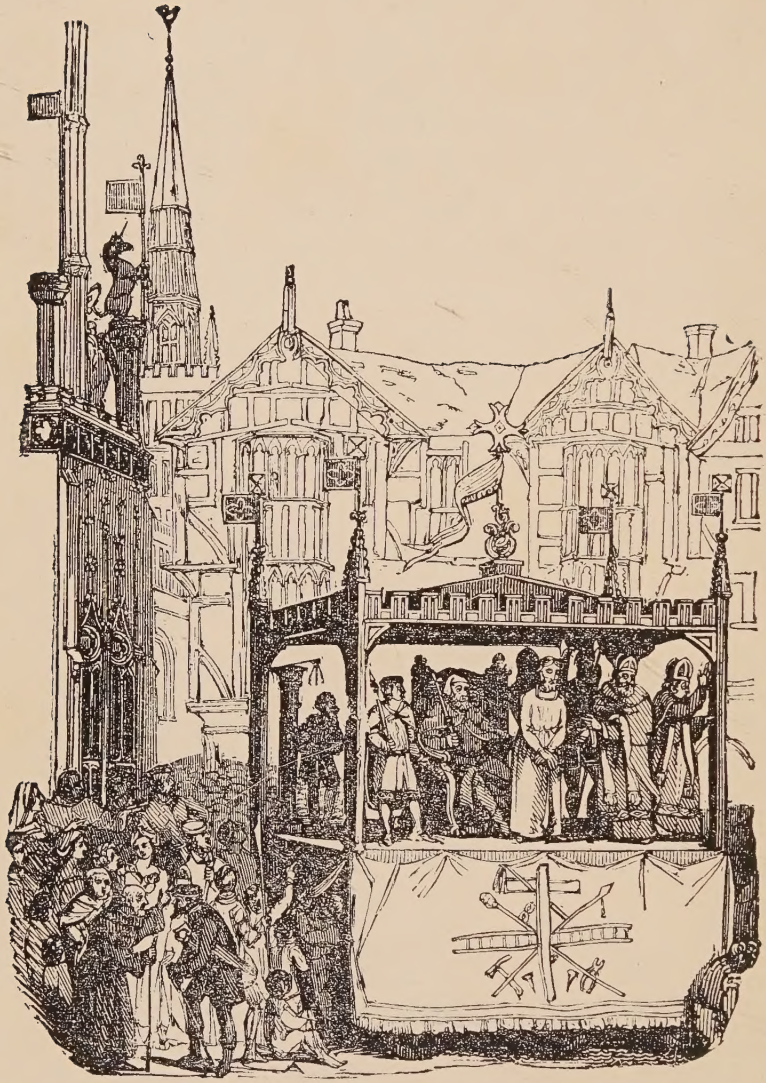

A MEDIEVAL SCRIPTURAL PAGEANT

WANDERINGS IN MEDIEVAL LONDON

BY

CHARLES PENDRILL

LONDON

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MUSEUM STREET

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PREFACE

THE inception of this book is really to be found in the last chapter. Wandering down Mark Lane one day it occurred to me to wonder, firstly, how such a curious name originated, and, secondly, what other interesting matters, such as curious old habits and customs, might arise while looking up the early history of the street. Pursuing the same method with other City spots and streets, chosen almost at random, most of the chapters of the book came to be written.

The material for such investigations was ready to hand in the form of many thousands of notes made in the course of several years' close study of the civic records. These included *Liber Legibus*, *Liber Custumarum*, *Liber Albus*, the Letter-Books covering the medieval period, Coroners' Rolls, Mayors' Court Rolls, Plea and Memoranda Rolls, extracts from Journals and Repertories, Calender of Wills and Remembrancia. The more easily accessible of the churchwardens' accounts of the parish churches were also found a fruitful source of information, and among chronicles of the period were Gregory, Arnold, Machyn, the Italian Relation, Stow, and many more.

The remaining chapters of the book, such as those dealing with the Great Selds and the Gardens, were suggested by the many entries in the chronicles and records referring to these matters.

The wanderer in London can find history and romance in almost every street through which he passes, providing he has soaked himself in the ancient archives. Take,

for example, the network of alleys and lanes on either side of Cheapside. These narrow streets, many of which are paved right across with just a gulley down their middle to carry away rain-water, easily take us back to the rows of timber houses and low-lying shops in which our ancestors lived and worked. Such neighbourhoods as Duke Street and Creechurch Lane, the site of the former Priory of Holy Trinity, at one end of the town, and Blackfriars at the other end, with their lanes which still reveal the layout of those monasteries, equally suggest the burden of an age-long history.

What joy, again, is felt when in the old chronicles and records we come across the origin of some modern custom or observe the contrast in the conduct of the people then and now in matters of trade, religion, personal habits or festivities. As a simple instance, on occasion of a Lord Mayor's Show or Coronation, where we decorate the streets by hanging them with flags, they would take up their carpets, haul down their tapestries, and hang them out of the windows. Mention of Coronations reminds us that personal habits even in high places exhibited striking contrasts with those we expect to find to-day. Thus we read of Anne Boleyn, at her Coronation feast, having two countesses, one on either side, holding napkins for her to spit in. Edward IV, again, so we are informed, had a habit of washing his legs on Saturday nights, but apparently did not pursue the practice with that regularity which his exalted position might lead us to expect.

The washing of separate parts of the anatomy seems, indeed, to have been more popular than bathing. In the Close Rolls of the reign of Henry III is a reference to the Wardrobe at Westminster, "where the king is

wont to wash his head." It appears that special utensils were made for the purpose, for in an inventory of 1326 one item concerns a brass dish for washing the head, valued at twopence.

Perhaps one of the most difficult old customs to understand is that recorded by Machyn under the year 1563, when a man living at Charing Cross was carried round the neighbourhood by four other men with a shalm, a bagpipe and a drum played before them. The reason for this was that he happened to be the next-door neighbour of a woman who was in the habit of beating her husband. The connection between the offence and the punishment seems hard to establish.

In 1306 we come across the contemporary method of receiving the tax-collector, a method which may commend itself to many a harassed citizen to-day. When one of these officials called at a tavern in Chepe to collect two shillings, the landlord's brother shouted, " Let those who thus assessed him be cursed and hanged by the devil."

Even terms of abuse and methods of annoyance exhibit a mental youthfulness beside which our modern efforts appear sophisticated. Take the case of a fripperer of Cornhill who, with some grudge against the Mayor and Aldermen, amused himself by standing on the pavement and neighing like a horse as they passed by; or the other aggrieved citizen who in 1291 in open court made that trilling noise with his lips and tongue which is still used by the vulgar as an expression of contempt, and is, I believe, known among a certain class as a " raspberry." The ingenious clerk at the Guildhall who recorded the occasion has left it to us in unmistakable form in the spelling " Tprhurt, Tprhurt." The Letter-Book describes the expression as an " English " one,

and sure enough it is included in more than one 14th-century satirical poem directed against the marauding Scots.

Another aggrieved litigant in 1338 adopted the "tell the world" method, when leaving the Sheriffs' Court at Guildhall he took his way through Lawrence Lane, Cheapside and Coleman Street, shouting at the top of his voice that the jurymen were liars.

A term of contempt found in 1300, the significance of which is more difficult to define, is "tredekeiles." It was directed against a number of navvies working in the streets, and appears to have some connection with their function of treading or beating down the ground.

The year 1388 gives us a delicious account of an altercation between an Alderman and a butcher. The former, approaching a stall in the market of Newgate Street, enquired the price of several pieces of meat, and on being asked four shillings, pronounced them too dear. Whereupon the butcher retorted, "I do verily believe that the meat is too dear for thee; who, I suppose, never bought as much meat as that for thine own use." After this hasty rejoinder the butcher realised from the pattern of his customer's hood that he had been addressing an Alderman, and instead of beating a retreat, made matters worse by adding, "It is a good thing for thee and thy fellows, the Aldermen, to be so wise and wary, who make but light of riding on the pavement, as some among ye have been doing." There is some reason, besides his impulsiveness, to suspect that the butcher was an Irishman, for he secured his release from Newgate, where his too ready tongue had landed him, at the intercession of the Archbishop of Armagh.

Most readers will be familiar with some of those

stories of the miraculous which are related by the old chroniclers with an air of such innocent credulity, but at times they could tell a "tall" story which can only have been invented for "leg-pulling" purposes. Thus Machyn in 1560 solemnly relates how a great flash of lightning so scared one of the beholders that his hair stood on end with such force that it could never afterwards be induced to lie down.

There is just as great a romance in the development of our familiar expressions, as when we find in Chaucer, "To maken vertu of necessitee," or "Bet than nevere is late"; or in Piers Ploughman, "Nede ne hath no lawe," or "Dead as a door-nail." The inner meaning of the last one seems impossible of explanation, and yet it has survived for so many centuries. It is a truism that the slang of to-day will be the current language of to-morrow, but it is not often we find a correct word of the 14th century becoming the slang of to-day. An example is the word "booze," which appears in the form "semybousy." The word "tippler," which might now be considered perfectly good in the same connection, then meant no more than a retailer of ale. Another word which has passed through the same process of deterioration is "nif," or perhaps "gnif," a vulgar way of indicating a smell, and yet no longer ago than the 17th century we find that an early form of our "nosegay" was "nosegnif."

A slang word with an interesting origin is "botcher," which we often use to denote a workman who "botches" or spoils his work. This is no other than the early word for butcher, and is found in 1494 applied by the tailors to members of their own trade who spoilt the cloth by reckless cutting.

It is in consequence of such curious tales, customs, habits or words so constantly cropping up in the records that this has inevitably become a book of digressions, for it is a fact that whenever one attempts to describe the early history of any street or place within the old walls some such ancient condition of life will immediately be suggested by the surroundings, with which it will be more or less connected.

Armed, then, with some knowledge of the history of our City, and pondering the truth that the new has but arisen upon the ruins of the old, we shall be able in imagination to invert the usual order of things by resurrecting the old upon the new. The great men of Old London left their footprints so deep on the sands of time that all the great modern stone buildings fail to obliterate the path they trod. The evidence is all around us, if we have eyes to see it, in the plan of the streets, the wharves by the river-side, the deserted churchyards, the surviving churches, the names of streets and houses, the open spaces and the Guildhall itself, enabling us still to identify the spots where great events happened, where many of the peculiar old customs had their origin, or where famous old buildings stood.

THE CRADLE

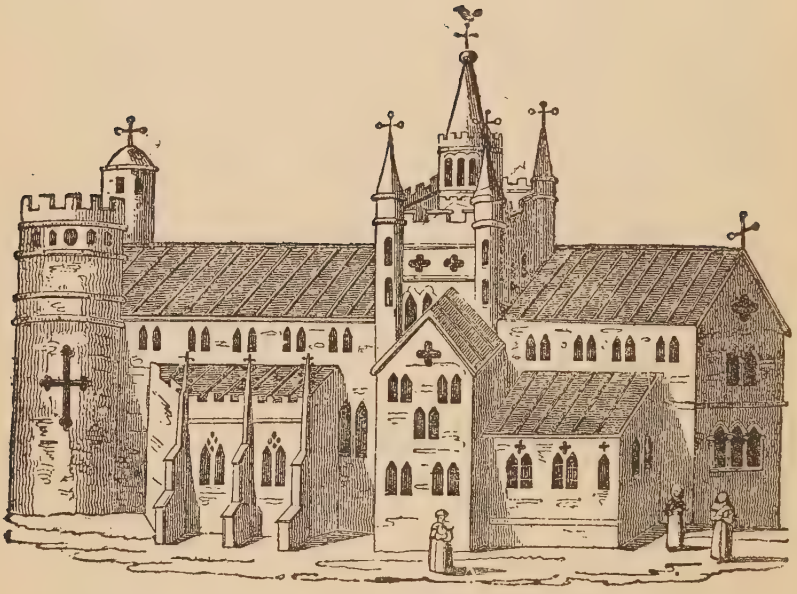
CONTENTS

		PAGE
	PREFACE	5
CHAPTER		
I.	ENTERING THE CITY	15
II.	OLD ALDGATE	30
III.	SOME LONDON DERELICTS	45
IV.	QUEENHITHE	55
V.	THE CITY'S ABBEY	69
VI.	THE FLEET RIVER	86
VII.	THE OLD GRASS MARKET	102
VIII.	THE GREAT SELDS OF LONDON	117
IX.	HOUNDSDITCH	139
X.	BOW LANE	150
XI.	WATERBEARERS' HALL	159
XII.	WALBROOK	174
XIII.	THE GARDEN CITY	190
XIV.	LONDON'S CARFAX	208
XV.	THE MANSION HOUSE	222
XVI.	MARK LANE	238
	INDEX	251

A DINNER-PARTY IN THE 17TH CENTURY

ILLUSTRATIONS

A MEDIEVAL SCRIPTURAL PAGEANT		*Frontispiece*
		PAGE
THE CRADLE		10
A DINNER-PARTY IN THE 17TH CENTURY		12
THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM, CLERKENWELL, IN 1508		14
A MEDIEVAL INN		29
OLD ALDGATE		44
A MEDIEVAL FUNERAL	FACING	48
OLD ST. PAUL'S		84
A "HOT HOUSE," OR STEW		100
ANCIENT FISHMONGERS' HALL		116
A BEDROOM SCENE	FACING	120
OLD LUDGATE		138
THE FIRST ROYAL EXCHANGE		149
MEDIEVAL HOUSES		158
CAGE AND STOCKS ON OLD LONDON BRIDGE		189
A MEDIEVAL GARDEN		207
NONSUCH HOUSE ON LONDON BRIDGE	FACING	224
THE VINTRY	FACING	224



THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM, CLERKENWELL, IN 1508

Wanderings in Medieval London

CHAPTER I

ENTERING THE CITY

TO all those whose business takes them daily to the City — to office, warehouse or shop — a fascinating pastime can be recommended which will transform the scene of their daily labours into a land of romance. Walking the streets with the eye of historic vision, the great gaunt blocks of offices will fade away, and in their place will appear the high-peaked roofs and overhanging gables of the ancient City, and the narrow lanes peopled with the folk of a former age, whose fanciful costumes and quaint customs are in complete harmony with their setting. Every step of the way is historic, and there is scarcely a spot we pass of which we cannot say—here in former times was such a building, or here such an event happened.

Alighting from our morning train at London Bridge Station, let us proceed towards the middle of the City by way of Cannon Street, and we shall find that the amount of historical matter which will crop up by the time we get half-way along that thoroughfare will be such that we shall be embarrassed simply by the necessity of keeping our subject within bounds.

Reaching the north side of London Bridge then, the first object to strike the eye is the statue of King William, the sailor king. Overshadowed by the tall building

behind it looks prosaic enough, and yet its site is practically identical with that formerly occupied by the famous Boar's Head in Chepe. We must not forget the enormous difference made in the layout of the ground hereabouts by the building of new London Bridge and the cutting of King William Street early in the 19th century. The old bridge, being somewhat east of the present one, entered the City in a line with Fish Street Hill, then known as Bridge Street, which was a turning out of Eastcheap. Eastcheap itself was continued as far as Crooked Lane, hence the Boar's Head tavern was in that street.

The Boar's Head will always be immortal as the supposed scene of the revels of Falstaff and Prince Hal, an identification first established early in the 18th century. There is, however, some historical confirmation of the suggestion that this is the actual spot where occurred the riot which brought Henry V, when Prince of Wales, into the presence of Justice Gascoyne, for the ancient house of the Princes of Wales appears to have been but a few doors away. In the 18th century the Boar's Head was the meeting-place of a Shakespearean club, the members of which held their celebrations dressed in costumes to represent Shakespear's characters. The great William Pitt was a member.

Next to the Boar's Head was the churchyard of St. Michael, Crooked Lane, the church itself abutting on the lane. It was as much the church of the Fishmongers as was St. Magnus, and is chiefly remarkable as the burial-place of Sir William Walworth, the slayer of Wat Tyler. John Lovekyn, fishmonger, to whom Walworth was apprenticed, rebuilt it in the 14th century, and it only ceased to exist to make room for the approach

to new London Bridge. Crooked Lane, so called from its winding course, was much longer than at present, leading down to Fish Street Hill. It was full of fishmongers' shops, and in 1560 a gunpowder store, which had been established there, blew up, destroying four houses, damaging several more, and killing nine people.

This part of Eastcheap was known as Great Eastcheap, and from early times was the home of the Cooks, the restaurant keepers of the middle ages. Their only other locality at the same period was Bread Street, Cheapside. We first hear of them in the 12th century, when Fitzstephen celebrates their fame as providers of every delicacy which visitors to the City could wish to eat. Their earliest mention in the records is in 1212, when the cookshops by the Thames were ordered to be plastered and whitewashed and their inner partitions removed. It is interesting to find that these cookshops in all probability gave rise to the word "Cockney," from the Latin *coquina*, translated by Stow as a Common Cookery, or streets of cooks.

The Company of Cooks was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1482, but existed as an organised City craft long before that, and the rules by which they were governed afford a considerable insight into their methods of business. One such rule, if now enforced, might well cause our modern multiple caterers to be seized with an Olympian apoplexy, for it provided that no food, whether flesh or fish, should be warmed up a second time for sale. They roasted meat in the old-fashioned manner, on spits, but if they served it too underdone, or in any other way badly cooked, they were liable to a fine of 6s. 8d. In 1531 an appropriate, if inhuman, revenge was taken on a cook who had killed sixteen

persons at a dinner by poisoning the soup. He was boiled to death at Smithfield. One bad habit of the cooks was that of plucking at the sleeves of passers-by with their greasy hands in their anxiety to procure custom—"whereby many debates and strives often tymes happen ayenst the peas," as their ordinances tell us.

This habit was not noted by Lydgate when he visited London in the 15th century, but he has celebrated others and left us a description of the scene in Eastcheap in the lines :—

> Then I hyed me into Est Chepe ;
> One cryes rybbs of befe, and many a pye ;
> Pewter potts they clattered on a heape,
> There was harpe, pype, and minstralsye ;
> Yea by cock, nay by cock, some began crye,
> Some songe of Jenken and Julyan for there mede ;
> But for lack of mony I myght not spede.

One can imagine the busy and noisy throng, the wandering minstrels singing for a meal, and the clatter of platters and ale-pots to the accompaniment of the boisterous music of the period.

Pies were perhaps the form of food dearest to the Londoner's heart, and the cooks of Eastcheap provided them in every variety of meat, fish, poultry and game. The makers of pies were known as "Pastelers," and in 1379 they were forbidden to sell beef pies as venison pies, or to make pies of goose, rabbit or giblets, on account of the evil condition to which some of these articles had come before being so used. An important part of their trade was the preparation of eel pies and open tarts or flans, which they sold to hucksters, who retailed them in the streets.

The cooks were allowed to sell beer, but it had to be served in pewter pots stamped with the seal of the City. They worked long hours, opening their shops before six in the morning and not closing them until after ten at night. They closed on Sundays, so that, as they expressed it, they " may serve Godde the better " ; but nevertheless for the convenience of travellers they kept open one shop in Eastcheap and one in Bread Street, each member of the company doing this duty in turn.

A considerable branch of the craft was outdoor catering. In the 15th century they usually supplied the annual feasts of the Mayor, the Sheriffs, the Serjeants of the Coif, the Merchant Tailors and other craft feasts. They also catered for wedding and funeral feasts. No member of the craft was allowed to supply more than two dinners and one supper on any one day.

At other times they would be called to a house to prepare a dinner where the provender had been bought by the host, and on these occasions they received a fee which to us would seem anything but extravagant. An example is to be found in the churchwardens' accounts of St. Mary at Hill in 1510, when the cook was paid fourpence for preparing a meal consisting of a pike, two soles, half a side of salt fish, a side of ling, roach, oysters, flounders, sauce, a quince pie, and nuts. The whole dinner cost 7s. 1d.

Just opposite to the spot we have been describing was Clement's Lane, with its church of St. Clement, Eastcheap. St. Clement's, notwithstanding its name, is not in Eastcheap, and never was. Before King William Street was cut, about 1831, Clement's Lane ran down from Lombard Street and emerged at a point where Great Eastcheap ended and Candlewyck Street began,

a fact which in early times induced the clerks who kept the records at Guildhall to refer to it cautiously as St. Clement's near Candlewyck Street.

In the middle ages St. Clement was the patron saint of the Plumbers—the workers in lead—and other metal workers, and appropriately enough the Plumbers had their furnaces around the church in Clement's Lane. The veneration in which the saint was held is exemplified in the ordinances of the Wyremongers, formulated in 1481, in which it is said of his feast day : " That it be kept and halowed as it is kept and halowed among other crafts of the same citee that in their werk occupie fire and water in eschewyng the hurtes that myght come thereby." The importance of the Plumbers in the middle ages was due to the extensive use of lead for the roofs of great houses, ecclesiastical buildings and palaces. The value of lead was about £3 15s. a ton in the 14th century, rising to £11 in the 16th, and the quantities used may be gathered from the statement that it took over twenty tons to roof the two aisles of the church of St. Mary at Hill. Most houses, whether roofed with lead or not, possessed leaden gutters, and in addition the Plumbers made the pipes to carry water to the conduits, for the wooden water-pipes made of hollowed tree-trunks, which are sometimes dug up in the London streets, belong to a later age.

The furnaces of the Plumbers were situated on a piece of ground in Clement's Lane called the Wood Hawe, or Woodyard, a name which affords an indication of its original use, and we first hear of a plumber there in 1337. The effect produced by their activities on the neighbours may be realised by a petition addressed to the Mayor in 1371 by the inhabitants of Clement's Lane,

Candlewyck Street, and the surrounding parishes to have the furnaces removed on account of the noxious smoke, which made ill everyone who smelt it. After much argument the Plumbers were allowed to remain on condition of building their chimneys higher, the better to carry off the smoke.

In Clement's Lane was also a baker's shop, which crops up now and again in the City records during a period of a hundred and fifty years. In 1303 it belonged to one Thomas de Wrotham, who let it with all its trade utensils to a baker, who paid by way of rent fourpence on every quarter of corn used. The existence of this system of carrying on a bakery only became known when a brown loaf was seized in the shop for being short in weight, and the Mayor, considering that such methods conduced to the systematic swindling of the public, called a jury of twelve bakers from each side of Walbrook to inform him how many bakeries in the City were let on similar terms. It then transpired that out of the fifty-three bakers in the City only seven owned their own houses, and all the rest rented them on this basis.

In 1361 it was known as the Red Bakehouse, and in 1440 it was carried on by one William Hobold, when its trade-mark was three "prikkys," for in the middle ages every loaf of bread had to be stamped with the baker's mark. The same man was in possession in 1453, when he figured among a number of bakers who refused to pay a due called "pesage" to the Mayor, a due levied to pay for the weighing of the flour as it came from the mill. This weighing was performed by a public official with scales provided by the Mayor, and was instituted in the interests of the bakers to see that they were not swindled by the millers.

This house when we first hear of it was a brown bakery, for in those days each baker was allowed to prepare only one kind of bread—brown or white. The white bakers made anything which could be made from bolted meal, such as white loaves and wastel buns. They also made white bread of inferior leaven called basket-bread, which, together with any loaves which turned out too light in weight or in any other way spoilt in the baking, were sold to the poor in the street market of Cheapside at three a penny instead of the usual price of two a penny. The brown bakers made tourte-bread, or coarse bread of unbolted meal, and this was the usual bread of the poor. Many of the poor also brought their own flour to be made into bread by the brown bakers, and this they baked at a charge of a penny a bushel. The same men also made horse-bread of peas and beans.

If any baker was caught persistently offering for sale bread short in weight he received the punishment of the hurdle. For this purpose he was strapped to a sort of low cart harnessed to a horse and so dragged through the streets, accompanied by the City minstrels playing on tabors and pipes, and finally brought back and released at his own door.

The bakers employed three kinds of assistants, the Fourners—furnace or oven men—who baked the bread ; the Whitehews, who weighed the dough and shaped the loaves ; and the Sowreours, whose province it was to make the dough, and whose name was derived from the yeast which they mixed into it. In the 15th century the first were paid sixteenpence a week, the second thirteenpence, and the last twelvepence, with a further penny for beer for a day and a night, which would enable each to consume a gallon of the cheapest or half

a gallon of the best. This was in addition to their board and lodging, for they lived at the bakery. It is curious to find them at this early period engaged in an agitation which at times disturbs the trade to-day—the abolition of night-baking.

Cannon Street was in early times the home of the Chandlers—makers of candles and dealers in wax. The earliest form of the name is as nearly as possible Candlewright Street, found in the 12th century. Its later form was Candlewyck Street from the 13th to the 16th century, now corrupted to Cannon Street. Wax candles were then about five times the price of tallow candles, and consequently the latter were used for most ordinary purposes. The Wax Chandlers were settled at the east end of Cannon Street, in the neighbourhood of St. Clement's Church, where in 1364 we hear of one of the trade, Richard Burgeis, being buried. He left money to the rector, and also to the collector of the church in lieu of tithes forgotten or withheld. The last is a frequent form of bequest in the middle ages, and is accounted for by the fact that tithes were paid piecemeal—a farthing in every ten shillings of rent on every Sunday and principal feast day throughout the year. The Wax Chandlers were still to be found in their ancient quarters in 1402, when we hear of one who lived in the house on the corner of Clement's Lane.

The Tallow Chandlers and the Wax Chandlers were always separate trades. The former made tallow candles, often called cotton candles from the material of the wicks. As in modern times, tallow candles were made in different sizes of so many to the pound, as, for example, twelve, and in early times the price was twopence a pound, falling in the 15th century to a penny farthing.

The Wax Chandlers made wax candles, many of them wonderfully ornamented and of gigantic size, for use in the church ; and torches, the chief use of which was for funerals. Many churches used to buy their own wax and send it to the chandler to be made up. The charge for this was a halfpenny a pound, except for the huge Paschal candle to burn before the Lord's Sepulchre at Easter, for the making of which a penny a pound was charged. In 1558 the Paschal candle for Westminster Abbey contained three hundred pounds of wax. It was made at the Abbey under the superintendence of the Master and Wardens of the Wax Chandlers' Company, and when the work was completed they adjourned for a great dinner.

As in almost all the trades of Old London adulteration on the part of unscrupulous craftsmen was frequent among the Wax Chandlers, and in their case took the form of stuffing the centre of candles with fat, turpentine, cobbler's wax and resin. In order to protect the public against this kind of fraud it was the rule that each craftsman should imprint his trade-mark on all his wares, a specimen of which, imprinted on wax, was kept at the Guildhall for reference.

The Weavers and Drapers were settled in Cannon Street at least as early as the Chandlers, but their habitat was in the neighbourhood of St. Swithin's Church. In 1278 record is found of Stephen Young, a draper, and in the following year of Geoffrey Brokesheved (or Broken Head), a buriller, both living near this spot. The Weavers were the oldest of the London guilds, and are first mentioned as early as the reign of Henry I. Henry II granted them a charter of incorporation on condition of paying him an annual tribute of two golden

marks, equivalent to twelve pounds of silver. They appear to have been in a constant state of enmity with the other citizens, who persuaded King John to endeavour to banish them from the City. In the early 14th century they held an annual guild meeting in the church of St. Nicholas Acons, the deserted churchyard of which can still be seen in Nicholas Lane, Lombard Street. At this meeting every member of the craft had to be present or be fined threepence.

The Weavers appear to have been a turbulent class. One of their offshoots was the Burillers, makers of burel or coarse cloth worn by the lower orders, and whenever these two classes quarrelled, which was often, they would go on strike and refuse to perform any more work until the matter was settled. They possess the distinction of being the originators of "ca' canny," for not only did they persistently take four days to weave a "cloth of Candlewick Street," which it was said could easily be performed in two or three, but they closed down altogether for two months after Christmas. These tactics were designed to make cloth scarce and dear, so that a weaver could live at his ease with a minimum of effort; but the result was that in the thirty years preceding 1321 the number of looms in London had fallen from three hundred and eighty to eighty. A few years later, in order to prevent the industry from dying out altogether, Edward III invited foreign weavers over from Flanders and Brabant, who settled near the same spot, but remained distinct from the native weavers for two centuries.

Burillers, because of the common cloth they made, regarded as humble members of the weavers' calling, could nevertheless at times do business on such a scale as to amass considerable fortunes. Thus in 1342 the

widow of one William Caxton, a buriller, left her mansion in Candlewyck Street and all her houses in St. Swithin's Lane to found a chantry in St. Swithin's Church, besides more tenements in Candlewyck Street to found a similar chantry in the chapel of St. Thomas of Acon in Cheapside, now the Mercers' Hall. This extract has an interest as showing the early settlement in London of the family of Caxton.

In the 15th century the Weavers were divided into two crafts or misteries—the Woollen Weavers and the Linen Weavers—a distinction which is not clear in early times. The Woollen Weavers were again subdivided into three kinds—weavers of woollen cloth for tapestry, of woollen cloth for drapery, and of woollen cloth for napery. At this time there were two bailiffs or overseers of the Weavers, one belonging to each branch of the trade.

London Stone, now for the sake of its preservation fixed in the wall of St. Swithin's Church, was in the middle ages on the opposite side of the way. It must have become considerably reduced in size during the last few hundred years, for Stow mentions that it was so firmly embedded in the ground that when carts collided with it, a frequent occurrence, they would be smashed, while the stone itself remained uninjured. According to the same authority its earliest mention is to be found in a gospel-book of King Athelstan, but its origin and purpose are alike matters of conjecture. Because its position is half-way between the eastern and western bounds of the Roman City, which at first probably extended only from London Bridge to Walbrook, it has been conjectured to be a military mile-mark, a centre from which all distances throughout the country were

measured. It was not so used in the middle ages, but was a popular landmark, in so much that any person living near it would be described as living by London Stone rather than as living in Candlewyck Street. Its popular use in this way lasted at least as late as Mary's reign. Thus Machyn, under the year 1556, describes a procession of Sanctuary men at Westminster Abbey dressed in white sheets and whipped as they went, among whom was a Westminster schoolboy, son of a hosier living "above London Stone," who found himself in this position as the result of killing another boy in Westminster Hall by hitting him beneath the ear with a stone. Its estimation in the popular mind may be gathered from the act of Jack Cade, otherwise known as Mortimer, when entering the City in 1450. Passing by London Stone he struck it with his sword and cried: "Now is Mortimer lord of this City." It was at this spot that one of the great fires of London started in the reign of King Stephen, consuming everything as far as Aldgate in one direction and St. Paul's in the other.

Beside the church is Salters' Hall Court, at a house in which lived Henry Fitz Aylwin, the first Mayor of London. He was appointed about 1188, and served for twenty-four years, after which the office became elective. This house is of particular interest because its history can be traced down through the centuries. In 1286 it was left by the then owner, Sir Robert Aguylum, to the Priory of Tortington, and hence it became known as the Prior of Tortington's Inn. Afterwards it came into the possession of the Earls of Oxford, and changed its name to Oxford Place. In the 15th century it became the meeting-place of the Company of Drapers, the members of which, as we have seen, were located in

Candlewyck Street. It thus became known as Drapers' Hall, although it did not actually come into the Company's possession until the year 1500. The Drapers moved into their present hall in Throgmorton Street in 1541, and the house behind Cannon Street became the Salters' Hall just a century later. It was a considerable property, and was described in 1286 as possessing a courtyard and garden.

Next door to Tortington Inn in the 13th century was a "tenter ground," where the cloth-workers of Candlewyck Street stretched their cloth. This operation was performed by means of a framework called a "tenter," and hooks known as "tenter-hooks," and here we have the origin of a popular expression—to be on tenter-hooks. By a curious and appropriate coincidence this piece of land in 1466 was in the possession of a lady named Dame Strech.

Opposite the church, where is now the courtyard of Cannon Street Railway Station, was in the middle ages a continuous row of houses and shops occupied mainly by the Weavers and Drapers, although we hear also of the inevitable brew-house found in almost every street, and in the 13th century of a "plumer" or feather-monger. Cannon Street Station itself occupies the site of the ancient Steelyard, the home of the Hanseatic League, whose history illustrates a most curious side of commerce in medieval times. However, as this institution reached back from its wharves on the Thames no farther than Thames Street, it seems inappropriate to enter into a description of it here.

We have now reached Walbrook, where Candlewyck Street ended in the middle ages, the remaining space between that and St. Paul's being occupied by numbers

of small lanes and alleys forbidding any direct approach to the Cathedral. At this end of Candlewyck Street lived the Skinners, their houses and shops reaching along Walbrook in one direction and up Budge Row, so named from budge, or lamb's fur, in the other.

A MEDIEVAL INN

CHAPTER II

OLD ALDGATE

THERE are few things more beautiful than an old gateway. Whether it is the arched entrance to an old cathedral city or baronial castle, or only the lych-gate of a country church, its grey and hoary stones but add dignity to the expansive welcome with which it bids us enter. A glance at St. John's Gate in Clerkenwell is sufficient to convince the least impressionable of Londoners that the old gates of the City, could they have been allowed to remain, would have been among the greatest ornaments our City possesses. It was not to be : by reason of their ancient functions they necessarily stood astride the main roads leading from the City, and the juggernaut of modern progress decreed that they must be crushed out of existence. All we can do now is carefully to preserve the memory of the spots on which they stood, and occasionally to reconstruct in imagination the events that centred round them in ancient times and the part they played in civic life.

It is obvious that a great city, such as London was even then, cannot live on its own resources, but must constantly be replenished from outside ; and when in addition that city is a huge market where goods are sent from many parts of the country for shipment abroad, while other goods are imported for distribution in the provinces, the gates, which were, except for the river, the only means of ingress and egress, must at all times

have been scenes of busy activity. Of none of them is this more true than of Aldgate, on account of its accessibility from the Eastern Counties, where much of London's food was produced.

From Roman times until the year 1761 the gate of Aldgate stood astride Aldgate Street between Duke Street and Houndsditch, at a point twenty-five feet east of the corner of Jewry Street. It was one of the four original gates of London built by the Romans, and was of the greatest importance throughout the middle ages, because the main road out of London to the Eastern Counties ran beneath it. Day by day through its portals streamed a regular service of carts bringing in corn and other victuals, and returning with merchandise of all kinds destined for the provincial towns. A toll of a penny a week was levied on these for repairing the roadway outside the gate, raised to twopence a week in 1376. Many of the carts passing through were loaded with the daily bread of the poor of London, baked at Stratford, and brought in each morning for sale in the open streets of the City. This was an important adjunct to London's bread supply, but, except in times of shortage, aroused some jealousy, especially among the City bakers, and this is probably reflected in the fact that the carts from Stratford were always charged twopence a week at Aldgate.

The bread-carts were restricted to certain spots in the City, where alone they were permitted to sell their loads. In 1437 these places were Billingsgate, Queenhithe, Fleetbridge, where is now Ludgate Circus, the Carfax or cross-roads at Leadenhall, and Cheapside. The allotted spot in Cheapside was familiarly known as "The Cartes in Chepe." The bakers of Stratford were

not allowed to leave their stands to hawk bread round the streets, and had to finish business and prepare to depart from the City by noon. In 1495 they endeavoured to circumvent this rule by bringing with them spare horses, mounted on which they proceeded to hawk the remainder of their stock after the carts had left. Later on they received a concession to the extent that they might deliver bread at their customers' houses, providing it had been ordered while they stood in the market-place. During a severe famine in 1527 it is recorded that the people flocked out to Mile End and besieged the bread-carts on their way from Stratford, so that the Mayor and Sheriffs had to go out and escort them to their stands in the City.

In the 16th century Aldgate was the point of entry to the City for London's military forces on occasions when, mustering in the fields of Mile End, they held a grand parade through the streets. At these times the picked fighting-men of the City arrayed themselves in most unwarlike silks and satins, in striking contrast to their bright steel weapons and formidable-looking guns. Such a parade took place on May 8, 1539, as a counter-blast to the efforts of "the venomous serpent, Pawle, Bishop of Rome," to stir up various European potentates to invade England and re-establish the Catholic religion. They mustered at Mile End at six in the morning in three "battayles." The Lord Mayor arrived in gilt armour, a black velvet coat with a rich cross embroidered on it, a black velvet cap upon his head, and a gold chain round his neck. Attending upon him were two pages in crimson velvet and cloth of gold, mounted on prancing coursers adorned with bells, while the Recorder affected a great two-handed sword, which

he carried over his shoulder. There were archers, pikemen, billmen, with halberdiers in white satin hose and doublets puffed with crimson sarcenet, and drums and fifes "which made a warrelyke noyse." In this array they marched through Aldgate at 9 a.m., and through the City to Westminster, where, in the King's presence, they shot off their guns "very terrybly." This performed, they returned by way of St. James's Park, Holborn and Cheapside to Leadenhall, where they dispersed.

Just outside Aldgate was a little house no more than 12 feet long and 7 feet broad, known as the "Loge" or lodge, with 10 feet of ground, the property of the Corporation, who used to let it for 4s. a year, and sometimes for as little as 1s. a year on condition that the tenant kept in repair the roadway beneath the gate. There was another house adjoining the churchyard of St. Botolph's Church, the tenant of which had the duty of cleaning the gate inside and out. In 1320 he was summoned for failing to perform this, and compelled to promise amendment.

Watch and ward were kept nightly, especially in time of war, foreign or domestic, by men selected from the neighbouring wards of the City. In 1309 it was guarded by men of Tower, Aldgate, Portsoken, Langbourn and Lime Street wards. In 1321 it fell to the lot of three wards only, Aldgate, Langbourn and Cornhill, while the keys were entrusted to two citizens with orders to lock the gate at sunset and keep it closed until sunrise. At the same time the wicket-gate was to be kept open until curfew was rung at St. Martin le Grand, and reopened when the first bell of the day was rung at St. Thomas of Acon. In 1381, at the time of Wat Tyler's rebellion,

the watch was composed of fifty armed men from Aldgate, Tower and Langbourn wards.

In ordinary times the duty of opening and shutting the gate fell to a serjeant of the city, who lived in the rooms above it. In 1305 these rooms were granted to the Mayor's serjeant on condition of keeping them roofed, and in 1342 to John Lucas, the clerk of the Sheriffs, for 13s. 4d. a year on the same condition. In 1374 they were occupied by Geoffrey Chaucer, the poet, together with a cellar beneath the gate. In the same year he was appointed collector of the Customs on wool in the Port of London, and in the intervals of duty he wrote in his lodgings over the gate some of those glorious works which have caused him to be regarded as the father of English poetry. He probably continued his abode here until 1386, when we find the rooms granted to one Richard Forster. In 1467 they were again held by the Mayor's serjeant-at-mace.

Beside the gate in the middle ages was a house of two stories known as the Weighouse. The lower half of it was a large open shed where the corn brought to the City through Aldgate was weighed at the Great Beam before it was sent to the miller. This was conducted by a serjeant of the City, who lived in the solar, or room over the Weighouse, and charged for his services a toll called "pesage," which was paid by the bakers who bought the corn. During the troubles attending the deposition of Edward II in 1326 this official was forcibly expelled by the mob, and was unable to obtain re-admission until 1332, when the Mayor, after examining the original grant of 1311, when his tenancy commenced, returned him the keys.

The old gate was pulled down in 1606, and the

foundation-stone of a new one laid at a depth of 16 feet below the surface of the soil in 1607. The new gate which arose upon the site was built upon a magnificent plan, in which King James I displayed a personal interest, and was completed in 1609. On its inner or City side was erected a figure of Fortune, and below her towards the sides other female figures representing Peace and Charity. On the outer side were two soldiers, each holding a stone ball, as though challenging the entry of enemies to the City, with below them a figure of King James in gilt armour, with a lion and a unicorn on either side. The apartments within the gate were used in the 18th century as a school-house.

In 1760, by reason of the increasing traffic of London, all the old gates were ordered to be removed, and Aldgate was sold as it stood to a carpenter of Coleman Street for £177 10s. for purposes of destruction. For a time it was re-erected at Bethnal Green, but has long since disappeared, and in all probability its stones have become incorporated in buildings in the district.

From somewhere about the 13th century Aldgate and its neighbourhood was the centre of the bell-founding industry. The early name for these craftsmen was "bellyeter," a word which remains in corrupted form as Billiter Street, where many of them had their foundries. In 1510 we find the church of St. Mary at Hill employing William Smith, a bell-founder of Aldgate, to recast certain of their bells. In their churchwardens' accounts is a payment of 1s. 5½d. to a scrivener to draw up the agreement between the founder and themselves, and later 6½d. "for Reves labur & his Brekefast for comyng from ludgate to Algate to here the IIIIth bell in Tewne." The result of this test was apparently unsatisfactory, for

later on four parishioners were sent down to Aldgate in company with the clerks of St. Antony's, the royal free chapel and school in Threadneedle Street, to see "whether Smythes bell wer Tewneabill or nat." The final entry concerns a payment of 13s. 4d. to William Smith "for makyng the scripture abought the bell." The calling in of expert help to ensure that the bells were in tune was a usual proceeding. In 1589, on a similar occasion, the churchwardens of St. Michael, Cornhill, took with them to the foundry first the Waits of the City, and afterwards, to make absolutely certain, another company of musicians.

It is curious to note that although the Jews before their expulsion from England in 1290 congregated principally in the neighbourhood of Old Jewry, they also had a settlement in this their modern locality. The site is indicated by Jewry Street, extending from Aldgate to Crutched Friars, which in the 14th century was known as Jewry Lane, or the Poor Jewry. It was here that in 1215 the barons opposed to King John, entering the City by way of Aldgate, pulled down the houses of the Jews and repaired the walls of London with the stones. It is said that in 1753 one of these stones, with an inscription on it, was found embedded in the town wall. This incident also demonstrates that not all the Jews living there were poor, for at that period it was only the wealthy who built their houses with stone, the usual building materials being wood and thatch.

The vicinity of the gate was not then as now a network of narrow streets, filled with warehouses and shops, but rather a district of gardens and monastery grounds, with no more than an occasional house. Among mansions still existing which can be traced back for several centuries

is the Three Nuns Hotel, which in 1555 was the mansion or inn of John Assheton, a tallow chandler. It was built round a great central courtyard, which became known for centuries as Three Nuns Yard until obliterated by the modern building. Its great hall was hung with painted tapestry representing the story of Joseph, and its owner bequeathed it with its beds, tablecloths, pewter platters and dishes, pots and pans, goblets and mazers, to his wife, with permission to let it for a term of thirty years or less. The painted tapestry mentioned above was a frequent form of wall-covering in most large houses of London before wall-paper was invented. It was cheaper than real worked tapestry, and consisted of cloth painted by hand, usually with some scriptural theme. This form of decoration gave rise to the craft of Painter-Stainers.

It is not generally realised what a thriving industry was that of painting in the middle ages. Painting was a craft rather than an art, for the craftsmen worked from copies which they kept in stock, combining and blending them to depict any desired scene or incident. Whether working on wall, ceiling or canvas, they filled in their spaces with bright primary colours and gold and silver without those intermediate tints which are used to-day to indicate distance or shadow.

It is true that no great number of specimens of medieval work of this kind have survived, but still it often happens that examples in all their pristine freshness of colouring are disclosed when in some old church the superincumbent layers of whitewash or wainscoting beneath which a more puritanical age decreed they should be decently interred are removed in the course of renovation. Every house of any pretension had its walls either painted or

hung with painted cloth. Every church had painting on its walls and framed pictures on canvas or wood hanging over the altar, or the rood, or in the side chapels.

The art of painting is said to have been brought to England early in the 8th century, but by the 13th it is found in full swing. Henry III was a notable patron of painting, and caused the walls, ceilings and windows of the chambers in many of his manors to be painted with roses or other flowers, or with allegorical figures or scriptural subjects, such as the story of Dives and Lazarus. In the hall of his castle at Winchester he had a map of the world depicted, and in a chamber at Clarendon the siege of Antioch by King Richard.

The craft of the painter merged insensibly into that of the imagour or image-maker, for in the same workshop they carved the images and tabernacles for the churches and painted them. They also painted banners to hang in the church, and hangings to screen the altar and the rood, and for domestic use, not only wall-coverings, but curtains and coverlets for beds, and from this branch of their craft they took the second word of their name, and so became Painter-Stainers.

Like other crafts, they had wardens or overseers to search for and condemn defective work, and also took apprentices. In 1349 we find a widow carrying on a painting business formerly belonging to her husband, who bequeathed to her apprentice her copies and instruments with one of her best chests to keep them in, and provided that before commencing business for himself he should serve for three years under Friar Thomas of Bermondsey Abbey.

The earliest ordinances or list of rules of the Painters

of London are found in the 13th century, and revised sets in 1401 and 1481. They received their charter of incorporation in 1581 under the name of Painter-Stainers, and their hall, designed by Sir Christopher Wren, is in Little Trinity Lane.

The population inhabiting the neighbourhood around Aldgate was in early times a curious mixture of the religious and the profane. Religious institutions of several different kinds were to be found close handy. Just to the south of the gate was a turret on the City wall with a garden adjoining, known as the "Hermitage," where one of the numerous London recluses lived in early times; but in 1325 the garden was let to a corn-merchant for 10s. a year, and shortly afterwards the turret itself for 6s. 8d. a year. Not far away the Minories marks the site of the house of the Nuns Minoresses, or nuns of St. Clare, the female part of the order of Friars Minor or Grey Friars, whose house was in Newgate Street.

On the point where Leadenhall Street and Fenchurch Street meet was a chapel dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel, founded in 1108, where travellers used to stop to pray for the success of their journey before passing through the gate. Before the foundation of the Priory of Holy Trinity it was a parish church. Its crypt, the only part then remaining, buried underground, was removed in the 19th century, when the street was widened, although some aver that part of it still remains buried beneath the pavement. The street hereabouts was much narrower in the middle ages, and just beyond the pump, on roughly what is now the apex of the pavement, John Stow, the London antiquary, at one time lived. He mentions that on one occasion the Bailiff

of Romford was hanged on a gibbet practically on his doorstep, but curiously enough he makes no mention of the chapel, which even then must have been just under his house. In the 15th and 16th centuries it was no uncommon thing to hang people in the streets, usually on the scene of their crime, and on some occasions they actually built gibbets on wheels and so paraded them round the City with their ghastly burdens.

The greatest religious establishment of the neighbourhood was the Priory of Holy Trinity, founded in the 12th century by Queen Matilda, wife of Henry I. It occupied the triangular piece of ground bounded roughly by Leadenhall Street, Heneage Lane and Duke Street, with Aldgate for its apex. Its great court was on the site of the present St. James's Square, its conventual church where is now Mitre Street and Mitre Court, and the monastery churchyard and Chapter House occupied what is now Mitre Square. It was burnt down in 1133 by a great fire which started in Cheapside, and afterwards rebuilt.

Holy Trinity, or Christchurch, as it was often called, was the richest priory in London, and throughout the middle ages was noted for its hospitality. The ground now comprising the ward of Portsoken was given to the Priory in 1125 by its then owners, the successors of the ancient Knightenguild, a military order which had possessed it in Saxon times. Each succeeding Prior thus became *ex officio* Alderman of Portsoken Ward, an arrangement which lasted until the Reformation. He used to sit at the Guildhall with the other Aldermen and ride with them on State occasions, but was not eligible for the mayoralty. Only once did this appointment of a non-elective Alderman arouse bad feeling in the City.

This was in 1439, when the Common Council begged the Mayor and Aldermen to oppose the appointment of a new Prior on account of his dissolute life, not because he was to be a Prior, but because he would thereby become an Alderman. Their protest came too late, and the new Prior, whose name was Sevenok, was installed, and is often found afterwards taking part in civic business with his fellow-Aldermen.

From the records it would appear that the Prior was not usually a regular attendant at the Court of Aldermen, but his presence at Guildhall is often recorded on occasion of elections of Mayor or Sheriffs. In other ways also he took his part in civic affairs, and one such occasion affords an excellent illustration of the energy with which the Corporation upheld the dignity of the City and the rights of the citizens. It was in 1468 that the King's Marshal ventured to arrest a citizen between St. Katharine's Hospital (now St. Katharine's Dock) and London Bridge, an act which constituted a violation of the City's liberties. On a protest being addressed to the King, the Marshal was compelled to bring his prisoner back to the exact spot where he had been arrested and there liberate him in the presence of the Prior of Holy Trinity as representing the Aldermen, one of the Sheriffs, the Chamberlain and the Town Clerk.

Holy Trinity was confiscated at the Reformation, and given in 1531 by Henry VIII to Sir Thomas Audley, one of his chief assistants in pillaging the monasteries and afterwards Lord Chancellor. It descended to the Duke of Norfolk, who married Audley's daughter, and it is from this circumstance that we get the names of Duke Street and the former Duke's Place, now represented by St. James's Square in Creechurch Lane. The

church of St. Katharine, Creechurch, stands in the Priory cemetery.

In the midst of all these incitements to piety it is surprising to find that in the late 13th and early 14th centuries the district surrounding the gate achieved an unsavoury reputation for evil living. At that time there are several notices of disorderly houses in the neighbourhood. Indeed, the word "disorderly" is to be taken literally, for it is recorded that they "make a great roystering with unknown minstrels, tabor-players and trumpeters to the great damage and tumult of the whole neighbourhood." One can imagine the nightly din caused by such barbaric instruments. In 1305 we get an example of the manner in which the citizens dealt with such a place. The affair concerns a house in St. Mary Axe, situated right against a yard belonging to the Priory of Holy Trinity. After a complaint made to the Alderman of the ward the beadle was ordered to muster the good men of the locality. These, with the Prior himself at their head, entered the premises by way of the Priory yard and forcibly removed all the doors and windows. Usually this had the desired effect, but on this occasion it was found necessary to return a few days later and eject the inmates. In those days it was customary to arrest the proprietor of such a house, shave off his hair and beard, and lead him to the pillory, to the sound of the trumpets and pipes of the City minstrels.

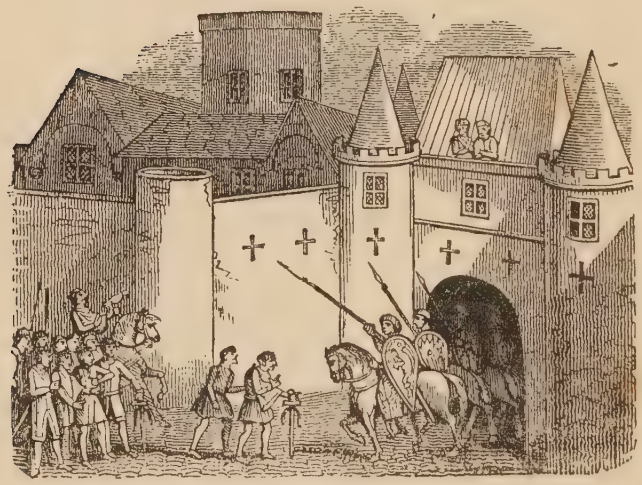
Any wretched creature found in such a place or in the streets would be dressed in a hood of striped cloth, a white wand placed in her hand, and so escorted by the waits of the City to the "thewe," a form of the pillory specially designed for women, and afterwards banished from the City. By the 16th century, when the chief

object of punishment was to make the delinquent appear ridiculous, we find these people and also men convicted of vicious living drawn in carts round the City, preceded by men ringing basins and pans, and sometimes suffering a whipping at the same time, while the crowd saluted them with rotten eggs and other missiles.

The middle ages was a time when justice was of the roughest description, yet it is refreshing to find that among the more thoughtful there was not lacking a real sense of chivalry towards women. An instance of this is found in 1424, when a woman was convicted of forgery, the regular punishment for which was confinement in the pillory. Instead of this she was ordered to stand in an open place with the forged document suspended from her neck, and the record goes on to say that the remainder of the punishment "that she hath deserved" is forgiven her "at reverence of womanhood and instance of the same Henry Barton (the prosecutor)." Again, in 1476 a countrywoman found selling dishes of butter good on the surface but stale underneath was on account of her sex stood under the pillory instead of upon it.

Many attempts have been made to elucidate the origin and meaning of the name "Aldgate," and as all such efforts are little more than guesswork, it may not perhaps be out of place to offer here a slight but purely tentative contribution to the problem. As in early times it is always spelt Alegate or Algate, it is obvious that it has no connection with the meaning "old." In the middle ages spelling was a very uncertain quantity, and depended largely on the locality of the writer and on his personal predilections, and from this point of view some light may be thrown on the question by certain entries in the

churchwardens' accounts of St. Mary at Hill. Close to the church was a spot called the Priests' Alley, where lived the clergy officiating at St. Mary's. In the accounts this alley is spelt indifferently Aley, Ally, and Ale, and at its entrance was a gate which is twice referred to, in 1509 and 1526, as the Ale gate. Is it possible that the name of Aldgate was formed in the same way, especially as it is occasionally spelt Allegate? The roadway was, of course, much narrower in olden times than it is to-day, but whether beneath the gate it was so narrow as to give the appearance of an alley it would be hard to say.



OLD ALDGATE

CHAPTER III

SOME LONDON DERELICTS

OUR great banks and insurance offices occupy so much space in the City that it comes as a surprise to find them suffering from land hunger. Yet as the appetite grows by what it feeds on, so they continue to cast longing eyes on any piece of land that becomes vacant, until, having gobbled up back courtways, small shops, ancient taverns, and many of the old churches, there is little left to become fodder for the money machine but the derelict churchyards which those churches once occupied, and which were allowed to continue a dreary existence by reason of some belated pang of conscience on the part of a former generation.

These thoughts are induced by the recent sale to a bank of St. Mildred's churchyard, but the question will inevitably be asked—was it worth saving? Truly, bereft of its ancient church, which fronted the Poultry, hidden in a back turning where it was unknown to and unseen by the thousands who pass through Cheapside daily, its surface concreted and its old effigies and gravestones relegated to the sides, too small to be made a place of rest, surrounded by high buildings, everything in it thick with grime, it was indeed a sight calculated to cheer the heart of a Mark Tapley on a soaking wet day. But the unattractiveness of the spot cannot prevent its destruction from being a piece of vandalism, for that dirty little square of concrete was hallowed with the memories of hundreds of years.

Really it is sometimes difficult to understand where the profit came in in the destruction of the City churches. The motive is plain with St. Mildred's, where it stood between the churchyard and the street on ground of exceptional value, but how of St. Mary Somerset in Thames Street, of which the tower alone has been left standing? Here the ground can have been of little value, and again in the case of Allhallows Staining, just behind Fenchurch Street, where so much land has been left surrounding the isolated tower that little can have been built upon.

Some of the churches which were attached to the derelict churchyards were of considerable fame in their day, so much so that it seems doubtful if public opinion would have tolerated their destruction but for the Great Fire, which swept many of them away. Possibly the most familiar of them all to Londoners is St. Peter Chepe, on account of the tree which gives such a welcome splash of colour to the sombreness of Cheapside. The houses in front of it were not built until 1401, before which the churchyard reached to the street front. In the middle ages the City kept its own band of minstrels, known as the City Waits, and on occasions of Lord Mayors' shows or royal progresses through the City they would often be posted on the leads of St. Peter's to enliven the proceedings with music. In 1559 Queen Elizabeth stopped here on her way through the City to be presented with a Bible in English at the church door.

St. John Zachary in Gresham Street and St. Olave in Silver Street were perhaps not above the average of importance among City churches, but St. Mildred in the Poultry, St. Benet Sherehog and St. Pancras, Soper Lane, often find mention in the records and were notable

edifices in the middle ages. St. Mildred's was in the very heart of the City, and its nearness to the Stocks Market made it one of the busiest spots in London. Here, besides other people of note, was buried in 1580 Thomas Tusser, author of the *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry*. The narrow court beside it, now known as St. Mildred's Court, was formerly called Scalding Alley, because the butchers of the Stocks Market used to dress their tripe and similar delicacies there. It changed its name in 1754, which was a pity, for otherwise it might have been more difficult for the before-mentioned bank to buy it from the Corporation for £5,000, and so add it to their churchyard as they have now succeeded in doing.

In Pancras Lane, a turning just behind Queen Victoria Street, are two sombre and forlorn-looking little graveyards quite close together, with heavily padlocked gates and forbidding tall iron railings, attached to which were at one time two of London's most important churches. That nearest to Queen Street, the former Soper Lane and home of the Pepperers, was the church of St. Pancras, the burial-place of several Mayors of London, including John Barnes of the famous Barnes's chest, a charitable treasure-chest believed to be still at Guildhall. In its tower was a bell called "Le Clok," to the maintenance of which many citizens bequeathed money. In 1374 William, Archbishop of Canterbury, granted forty days' indulgence to all true penitents who would contribute to it. This church possessed the doubtful distinction that one of its parsons, William Sawtre, was among the earliest of the Protestant martyrs, being burned at Smithfield for heresy in 1401.

The other churchyard in Pancras Lane belonged to

the church of St. Benet Sherehog, destroyed in the Great Fire. In very early times it was dedicated to St. Osyth, a memory of which is preserved in Sise Lane, opposite the end of which the churchyard stands. Sise is a corruption of St. Osyth. The church probably derived the second word of its name from one William Serehog, who lived near it in the 12th century. Three Mayors were buried in the church, which also contained some curious epitaphs. It is said that after the Fire the church plate was embezzled by the churchwardens, a rare thing to happen to a City church.

In the neighbourhood of Upper Thames Street and the turnings leading from it is a whole group of these derelict churchyards, looking sadly forlorn and woe-begone, but suggesting that at one time the district must have been provided with more churches relative to its area than any other part of London. It is pleasant, however, to record a few such spots which are so carefully and lovingly tended that they form most delightful oases among their surroundings of ugly bricks and mortar. The most beautiful of them all is the ancient churchyard of St. Christopher le Stocks within the courtyard of the Bank of England, which is always cultivated with a mass of blooms which warms the Londoner's heart towards that institution. Another which should not be passed over is that of St. Mary Staining, a quiet backwater just behind Noble Street, Aldersgate Street, and a perfect haven of peace with its well-kept green lawn and beautiful flowers. The well-swept paths and trim bushes of St. Alphage in London Wall will also attract the passer-by to peep through its railings at the fine piece of old London Wall there to be seen with its characteristic lines of red tile between the stones. This was the churchyard of

A MEDIEVAL FUNERAL

the original church of St. Alphage, pulled down as long ago as the reign of Henry VIII. The church of the hospital known as Elsing Spittle on the opposite side of the way was then rechristened St. Alphage and used in its place.

Elsing Spittle was London's home for the blind, founded by William Elsing, a mercer, in 1329, and by his will endowed with property in many parts of the City. It was confiscated, like other hospitals, at the Reformation on the excuse that in the middle ages all hospitals were religious foundations. Some of these were afterwards returned to the City by Henry VIII and Edward VI, who thus achieved without cost to themselves the reputation of being founders of hospitals. Henry VIII is often called the founder of Bart's because he endowed it by the simple process of pulling down two churches which did not belong to him and giving their sites to the hospital.

It may be that the deplorable condition and the ultimate disappearance of these City derelicts matter less in the estimation of some because in the middle ages only the poor and lowly were buried in the churchyards. Nowadays it is necessary to perform some signal service to the State before one can be buried inside a church, but then anyone could achieve this distinction for a fee of 6s. 8d. and upwards. People who intended to be buried within the church often indicated the exact spot where the interment should take place, such as in the chancel or the porch, or before the altar or the rood, or beside the seat where they usually sat. Others took care that the affair should assume the proportions of a public event. One such in 1349 provided that the bells of St. Paul's and of every parish church in London

should be rung. Others were more preoccupied by the desirability of getting through Purgatory as quickly as possible, and made arrangements accordingly. One citizen in 1391 bequeathed his lands and tenements to his wife for life, to be sold afterwards for pious purposes, but on second thoughts made a codicil in which, explaining that he desired the speedy health of his soul, he instructed his executors to sell the estate for the aforesaid pious purposes right away.

The pious purposes here referred to more often took the form of enormous numbers of masses said for the deceased's soul than of charity. When, however, it took the last-named form it often assumed a most whimsical correspondence with some Biblical event. The great John Philpot himself left sums of money to thirteen poor people in honour of the five wounds of Christ, the five joys of Mary, and the Trinity—total thirteen. In 1392, 17s. was left to the high altar of the church of St. Martin Ludgate in memory of the ten commandments plus the seven mortal sins.

It appears from the records that anyone who wished could be buried at St. Paul's in the " Common Churchyard." There is a bequest in 1459 of certain property to the church of St. Michael, Queenhithe, on condition that they ceased to use their small churchyard for burials except under extreme necessity, the parishioners for the future to be buried in St. Paul's churchyard. In the churchwardens' accounts of St. Andrew Hubbard is an entry of the year 1523 concerning the arrangements when any parishioner was to be buried at St. Paul's, by which the parish agreed for the sake of charity to pay any expenses over and above those usually charged for burial in their own parish. Nevertheless it seems to

have been customary to make a bequest to St. Paul's on these occasions, and not necessarily of money. In 1368 we hear of a black girdle with silver buckle left to the crucifix at the north door of St. Paul's, another yellow one with silver buckle together with five gold rings to the image of St. Mary within the cathedral, and a blue girdle to the shrine of St. Erkenwald, the original builder. These gifts were not intended to be sold for the upkeep of the cathedral, or of the favoured images, but to be suspended upon them, there to remain in perpetuity.

A fact peculiarly noticeable about the City churchyards is their height, usually several feet above the pavement. The streets have risen about a foot in a century, but the churchyards have got ahead of them with an accumulation of the bones of our ancestors. Many were also supplied with charnel houses in which superfluous relics of humanity were stored when turned up by the spade. The sexton, digging fresh graves year after year, was unobstructed by awkward pieces of wood getting into his way, for in the middle ages the poor were consigned to the earth without the intervention of coffins. The church of St. Mildred in the Poultry is recorded to have kept in stock three coffins, one pickaxe, one shovel and a rammer to beat down the graves. The parish would, indeed, for a shilling accommodate you with the temporary use of an elegant parish pall to cover the parish coffin on its way from the house to the church and from the church to the grave, and when all was over would sell you a tombstone from 5s. upwards.

The church would not disdain at times to make a useful profit on these transactions. In the accounts of St. Michael Cornhill for the year 1457 we find the

churchwardens buying an old gravestone for 2s. 4d. and reselling it for 6s. 8d. to the sorrowing relatives of a deceased parishioner. Similarly in 1549, when all the altars in the churches were removed, the church of St. Mary at Hill had to employ two labourers for six days to accomplish the work, but saved 3s. 4d. of the expense by selling an altar-stone to be laid on the grave of the "goodwife Sampson." The general rule followed seems to have been to charge the rich as much as possible, while letting the poor off cheaply. Indeed, it was regarded as an act of piety to pay for the burial of the poor or the stranger, and the rich would rush to perform such a service. A deceased hermit was a special prize of this character. Collections were often made in the church to form a fund for burying the poorer parishioners.

But when it came to burying the well-to-do, besides the price of the grave they would charge another 3s. 4d. for digging it, although out of this they paid the gravedigger only fourpence. Likewise, for ringing the bells the relatives would be charged five or six shillings, whilst the ringer received but sixpence. The churches were often compelled to ring the bells on public occasions without payment, a duty to which there was always some objection because they still had to pay the bell-ringers. Among such occasions were the progresses of the sovereign through the streets, when all the church bells along the route had to be rung, and to enforce this the king's harbinger would seal up the doors of any church which failed in its duty until a fine was paid. An example of the practice is found in the accounts of St. Mary at Hill under the year 1493, when occurs the entry: "Paid to the king's almoner for fault of ringing

the bells against the king, IIIIs Xd." It may be gathered, however, that such an imposition was not always easy to collect, from an entry in Machyn's Diary, where, after relating that in 1563 Elizabeth's harbinger sealed up the doors of every church on the water-side from Temple Bar to the Tower for this reason, he adds significantly, " but he could get no thyng yet."

There were no undertakers in the middle ages, although a great authority on London history states that the tradesmen known as Upholders were employed in that capacity.[1] This appears to be an error, for in the many references to Upholders found in the records, including their ordinances formulated in 1474, there is no word suggesting any connection between them and the furnishing of funerals. Indeed, if the joke may be pardoned, there seem to be no two classes of men more divergent than those who made mattresses and bolsters to hold you up and those who now furnish the wherewithal to keep you under. In those days the coffin was made by the local carpenter and the pall by the tailor or the broderer, and the deceased was carried from the house to the church on the shoulders of his friends. It is true there was a hearse, which was not a funeral car, but rather a wooden framework covered with cloth or velvet and decorated with candles and flags, erected in the church to place the body upon during the funeral ceremonies.

An additional luxury often indulged in at funerals was the burning of torches during the obsequies. These were also supplied by the church; they were weighed before and after the ceremony, and the mourners charged with the wastage. The people of the middle ages were

[1] Riley's *Memorials of London*, Introduction, p. xxii.

quite accustomed to burn torches in the daytime on occasions both of sorrow and rejoicing.

The present age must not be given all the blame for the condition of the City churchyards, which were always the Cinderellas of London's open spaces. In early times one synod after another inveighed against the practice of using them for secular purposes and threatened punishment against those who played tennis, hand-ball, foot-ball, stool-ball, or dancing, or held meetings in them. So little regard was paid to these orders, however, that we find the authorities of the City themselves ordering the weavers of Flanders to hold their trade meetings in the churchyard of St. Laurence Pountney, and those of Brabant to hold theirs in the churchyard of St. Mary Somerset. Both of these happen to be numbered among the churches which have disappeared, one leaving behind its churchyard and the other its tower.

During medieval times the churchyard was usually the feeding-place of the parson's horse and the happy hunting-ground of the chickens of the neighbours, who, in the good old London fashion, lived one family in a room in high tenements of several stories. They were also the spots favoured by the housewives for the purpose of hanging out the washing. In the churchwardens' accounts of the City churches we read time after time of loads of dung and rubbish being cleared from the churchyards. Their condition even to a recent period may be gathered from a statement often made by the writer's grandfather, that in his youth in the early 19th century it was the custom among the City-bred boys to play skittles in them with human bones for pins and skulls for skittle-balls.

CHAPTER IV

QUEENHITHE

AMID the whirl and bustle of the great City there are still quiet backwaters where, even during business hours, one may ruminate on the chances and changes of a thousand years. Among them there is none where a more profitable half-hour may be spent on a sunny afternoon than the ancient port of Queenhithe in Upper Thames Street. Turning down Huggin Lane from Queen Victoria Street will be seen on the opposite side of Thames Street a little square with an Italian-named restaurant on the corner, and proceeding along its eastern edge as far as the stairs which lead down to the river we can turn and look back upon the curious square bite in the shore which constitutes Queenhithe. The quietness of the scene, the slow-going traffic on the river beyond, and the barges gently rocking up and down in unison with the lapping of the tide, makes it difficult to realise that this, with Billingsgate and the Fleet River, was the great and busy port of London seven hundred and more years ago. This was before the docks which stretch for miles and miles below London Bridge were even dreamt of.

Queenhithe is said to have been founded by Ethelred, son-in-law of Alfred the Great, and it still presents the same shape and general features as in those far-off days. It was originally the property of the kings, who pocketed the profit derived from the tolls levied there, until Henry II granted it to his Queen for her dower. Some

think that it derived its name from this circumstance, but as it was known in the 12th century as Cornhithe, the landing-place for corn, we may here perhaps see its origin through the intermediate Quern-hithe. Henry III bestowed it upon his brother, Richard Earl of Cornwall, who in 1246 sold his rights to the City in return for an annuity of £50, plus £3 a year to be paid to the leper hospital at St. Giles in the Fields. After the death of the Earl's son Edmund in 1301 this annuity of £50 reverted to the Crown, and out of it Edward I granted £21 a year for life to Edmund's widow. Subsequently it became customary for succeeding kings to grant parts of it to their favourites, who received their share direct from the Corporation, the balance being added to the "ferm" of London which each succeeding Sheriff had to pay into the Exchequer at the end of his term. Thus in 1309 Edward II granted £5 a year out of it to his favourite Piers Gavestone, after whose death in 1316 he gave £43 18s. 9¾d. a year for life to his widow. Later in the century Edward III granted the whole annuity of £50 to Sir John de Pulteney, the same who gave his name to the church and lane of St. Laurence Pountney in Cannon Street.

In 1319 Edward II demanded that the City should deliver up the custody of Queenhithe to his nominee, Robert de Hemenhale. This they absolutely refused to do on account of the grant from the Earl of Cornwall, an example of the tenacity with which they held on to a privilege once acquired.

There is perhaps no other spot in London where the romance of olden times is so plainly expressed ; to lean upon the low wall on the eastern side of Queenhithe and gaze upon the haven which has existed here since Saxon

times, and perhaps from Roman times, brings back the past with a vividness unequalled elsewhere, for the scene presented to our eyes by the dock buildings can differ but little from that which it exhibited when Alfred was King and Queenhithe was known as Ethelredshithe or Edredshithe. Billingsgate is, of course, as old a port, but its appearance has been spoilt from the antiquarian point of view by the reclamation of the foreshore, for in ancient times it exhibited a similar bite in the land, by reason of which it was familiarly known as "The Hole."

In early times corn was the chief commodity landed at Queenhithe proper, and granaries were built close handy to store it. In 1310 we hear of two granaries here owned by a grain merchant of Henley, with garrets over them, one of which was known as "the western garret." To the quay came the bakers and brewers of the City to purchase their supplies of grain, and they paid an inclusive charge for its measurement, porterage, and carriage to their homes. For a quarter containing eight bushels three farthings was charged if it were going to any place in the vicinity, such as Cheapside or Walbrook, a penny to Fleet Bridge, Cornhill, Eastcheap or Billingsgate, and a penny farthing as far as the bars in the suburbs. There were eight officials appointed by the City to measure the corn as it was sold. These were called corn-meters, and were provided with quarters, bushels, strikes and corn-dishes for the performance of their office. Each was assisted by three servants, each provided with five sacks to hold the measured grain.

No tolls were exacted from citizens for loading and unloading their goods at Queenhithe, and in other ways their privileges were strictly safeguarded. Thus in

1298 we hear of a stranger merchant being fined £20, and his ship and cargo seized until he paid, for the offence of selling mussels to another stranger instead of to the citizens ; in 1300 a boatload of timber was seized for the same reason. To secure cheap corn for the householders of the City all grain landed at Queenhithe had to be offered freely in open market for three days before it could be sold to a dealer. In the 16th century the experiment was tried of grinding the corn as it was unloaded. For this purpose a mill was erected between two barges and towed out into the river so that its wheels could be turned by the tide, but this was soon abandoned.

In the records we read of many kinds of goods landed at Queenhithe besides corn, such as salt, timber, fish and garlic, but as there are found in the immediate neighbourhood wharves with such names as Garlickhithe, Saltwharf, Timberhithe and Fishwharf, we shall not be far wrong in concluding that the ancient *Ripa Reginæ* or the Queen's hithe comprised a great deal more than the modern haven of Queenhithe. That there were definite parts of the hithe allocated to the discharge of various classes of goods is shown by an order of 1475 that oyster and mussel boats should change their moorings from one side of Queenhithe to the other. Indeed, all this part, from somewhere about Southwark Bridge to near Paul's Wharf, was included in the term Queenhithe, enabling us to form some idea of the great trade of the port, which caused it to give its name to the entire ward.

Garlickhithe, where onions and garlic were landed, was somewhat east of Queenhithe. Although as the name of a wharf it has long since disappeared, its former locality is indicated by Garlick Hill, with its church still known as St. James Garlickhithe.

Immediately to the west of Queenhithe Saltwharf stood between it and Stew Lane. In the middle ages large quantities of salt were imported from Poitou and the Bay of Biscay, the latter giving rise to the term Bay Salt, and the importance of the trade is attested by the powerful Company of Salters which was founded upon it. At Saltwharf there were four measurers or salt-meters appointed by the company, each with one servant and eight sacks. In 1419 it was decided that a wey of salt should contain five quarters, and that fourpence for measuring it should be paid by the vendor. In 1300 a record is found of a salt-meter named Laurence of Queenhithe, who was prosecuted for working at a wage of twopence a day in selling the salt, oysters and mussels of foreign shipowners. It is curious to find that at one time the weights and measures for salt were subject to testing by the Tallow Chandlers. The Company of Salters fought them on this question and obtained a decision in their favour in 1419.

To the east of Saltwharf was Timberhithe, a quay of considerable extent, whose position is marked by the present High Timber Street, a lane running parallel with Thames Street and connecting Brooks Wharf and Brokenwharf. Part of Timberhithe is referred to in 1287 as "Reswarve" or Rushwharf, because the rush-boats landed their cargoes there. Throughout the middle ages enormous quantities of rushes were brought into London, largely in boats which discharged them at this spot. From here they were removed to the Rome-land, a spot which will be referred to later, where they were tied into bundles and sold at three-halfpence each. As is well known, these rushes were used for covering the floors of houses.

When building a house it was not usual to pave or tile the ground floor, although paving-tiles were plentiful and cheap, their usual price in the 15th century being about a halfpenny each. But in the middle ages the houses of ordinary folk were built principally of wood, and not even of seasoned wood. A builder would ride to a timber plantation in the country, select the trees he would have, buy them, cut them down, and bring them to London. Here he would dig a pit to enable two men, one above and one below, to saw them into planks, and start to build his house. Under such a system the draughts which entered at every crevice would have inflicted the inhabitants with perpetual cold feet had they not adopted the device of leaving the bare ground to serve as their floor and piling it thickly with rushes. Periodically they would add a top dressing of rushes to keep its appearance clean, and at last, when its condition became intolerable, they would clear it all out, put down a load of fresh loam, stamp it well down, and start afresh.

Between Timberhithe and Brokenwharf, almost opposite the solitary tower of St. Mary Somerset, was Fish-wharf, where in early times the greater part of London's fish supply was landed. The wholesale fish market was held on the quay, where the shipowners had their shops or sheds similar to those to be seen in Billingsgate to-day. Beside the church of St. Mary Somerset was a lane known as Old Fish Street Hill, leading up to Old Fish Street, the oldest retail fish market in London, where the fish was sold by the retailers who had bought it from the wholesalers on the quay below. In the early 14th century there was great contention between these two classes of dealers because the fishmongers of Fish-

wharf, who were not only merchants but owners of fishing vessels, wanted to sell retail as well as wholesale on their quay. On the Fishmongers' Company forbidding them to do this, they presented in 1321 a petition to the justices sitting at the Tower to have the order annulled. Their method of business was, after all, only in accordance with the usual rule of the City that victuals, as we have seen above in the case of corn, were to be offered to the public before they were sold to dealers. The merchants of Fishwharf claimed that they had sold retail as well as wholesale from time out of mind to the advantage of the public, for whereas a private person could buy herrings at Fishwharf for ten a penny, they could not be bought elsewhere cheaper than six or seven for a penny. A jury being called to decide this momentous question, declared it illegal to sell fish by retail on any quay where it was landed, and that the fishmongers of Fishwharf had frequently been restrained from doing so. In fact, it ought not to be sold even wholesale on the quay, but direct from the boats, and should only be sold retail in the retail markets, which were Bridge Street, Old Fish Street and the Stocks Market.

As in the case of all other goods landed at Queenhithe, the citizen fishmongers had the free use of the quay, while a toll was levied on fish belonging to outsiders. But in this case, instead of a money payment, it took the form of a proportion of the fish landed, as, for example, two salmon out of every hundred, and a hundred herrings from a boatload. This was in addition to a money charge for "strandage," or the privilege of mooring the boat—for a large vessel twopence, a small vessel a penny, and a boat a halfpenny. The list of tolls shows that a great proportion of the fish eaten at that time was salted.

Among such are found melwel, salmon, mackerel, haddock, merling, conger, sturgeon, whale and herring. These were known as "stockfish," because they were cured as hard as a stock or stick, by reason of which the fishmongers were divided into two separate trades, the Stockfishmongers and the Freshfishmongers.

Boats bringing oysters, mussels and whelks to Queenhithe were allowed to remain for one high tide and two ebbs, selling their catch direct to the public. It was only if at the end of their stay some of the shellfish still remained on hand that they could sell to a shopkeeper. Any boat-owner infringing these regulations was liable to the seizure of his cargo. There was an official measurer and assayer of oysters and mussels to check their quantity and quality, an office usually bestowed upon serjeants of the Mayor as a reward for long service. In 1420 it was given by the famous Richard Whittington, then Mayor, to an assistant of the serjeants on condition that he fulfilled the duty of suspending "whenever necessary" a cloth over the Mayor and Aldermen on occasions when they went to hear sermons in St. Paul's churchyard. The "whenever necessary" refers apparently to rainy days, and probably constitutes the earliest reference in the City archives to the purposes of a modern umbrella.

At all periods of history oysters have been a popular article of consumption in London, and their universal appeal is instanced by stray references to their patrons through the ages from John of Gaunt to Henry Machyn and Mr. Pepys. Machyn relates how at eight o'clock of a July morning in 1557 he and several friends were treated to an oyster feast by Master David Gyttons and Master Smyth in their wine cellar in Anchor Lane, a

turning out of Thames Street close to Queenhithe. They ate their oysters with onions from the tops of hogsheads, and washed them down with potations of ale, claret, muscatel and malmsey. A century later, in 1661, Mr. Pepys, in one of his frequent references to oysters, relates how he landed at Queenhithe with two friends and ate a barrel of them at the tavern there.

Throughout the middle ages oysters were sold at fourpence a bushel, but in the 17th century, by reason of the spread of their reputation abroad and consequent export, they rose as high as 2s. a bushel. Such a hardship as this caused grave concern, even in the most exalted circles, until the King ordered the officials of the Admiralty to arrest any foreign vessel caught taking them out of the country. Oyster-knives find their first mention in the ordinances of the Cutlers in 1485, but not by any means as a new article of manufacture.

Immediately west of Fishwharf was Brokenwharf, which has retained its curious name from the 13th century until now. This name is said to have arisen from the ruinous condition into which it was allowed to lapse through disagreements between two Abbots who were its owners. A complaint was made in 1305 by the attorney of the Abbot of St. Albans that when he went to make distraint on a house at Brokenwharf someone threw water over him, for which assault he claimed 20s. damages.

Close to Queenhithe, and probably represented now by the little square facing Thames Street, was a piece of ground known as the Romeland, where corn and other victuals, wood and rushes were dumped in order to keep the quay itself clear for the landing of fresh supplies. Here they were sorted, measured and sold. The origin

of the name is obscure; it was not confined to the piece of land at Queenhithe, but was conferred upon spaces used for a similar purpose adjacent to other ports of London, such as Billingsgate, Dowgate, and near the Tower. The Romeland at Queenhithe and also that at Billingsgate served a further purpose as the dumping-ground for the refuse of their respective neighbourhoods. In a list of tolls levied in 1368 for the purpose of cleaning the Romeland at Queenhithe is included a charge of 2s. on every man depositing filth there.

The fact is that in early times any open space in London remaining uncultivated or unbuilt upon soon became the local refuse heap. Such were termed "laystalls," and were periodically cleared and their accumulations removed by cart or by boat to selected spots in the country surrounding the City. So it appears that some of our modern suburbs to the north of the City are built upon generations of London rubbish. In a will of the year 1638 we read of "the laystall called Islington." All the inhabitants of a parish would be assessed for the clearance of these laystalls. In the churchwardens' accounts of St. Mary at Hill under the year 1551–2 we find the entry, "Paid for the laystall, 1s. 4d.," and again in 1554, "Paid to the laystall and boat for the church, 2s. 8d."

There were so many of these laystalls along the banks of the Thames that they were an invariable source of annoyance to the sovereign on his journeys by boat between Westminster and the Tower, and in consequence he often sent peremptory orders to the Mayor to have them removed. This occurred in 1393, and again in 1472. In the 16th century even Smithfield contained a laystall, and in the early part of the 17th efforts were

made to clear it away. Some conditions, however, were regarded as even worse than this, for in 1618, upon the City proposing to start a market there for raw hides, the Lord Chief Justice wrote to the Lord Mayor saying that this would be so offensive that it had better remain a laystall.

Darkhouse Lane and Stew Lane, the two narrow alleys at Queenhithe leading down to the river, mark the approach to ancient public stairs giving access to the water. In olden times any such stair or jetty was called a "brigge" or bridge, and at the end of one of these lanes, it would be difficult now to say which, was Lauendresbrigge, or the jetty of the laundresses, where these necessary public servants used to come to wash clothes in the river. In 1324 the coroners' rolls record the death of a woman who went to these stairs to fill two pitchers with water, fell in, and was drowned. Her body remained in the river for two days until found by her father, who, alarmed by her absence from home, came in search of her. In conformity with the ancient law of deodand the stair from which she fell, valued at fourpence, was declared forfeited to the King. In 1343 it is recorded as a matter to be inquired into that an oyster-monger had been wrongfully levying a toll on members of the public frequenting Lauendresbrigge.

It would perhaps be difficult to-day to find a narrower lane than Darkhouse Lane, but that it was at least as gloomy in the middle ages is shown by the original form of its name—le Derke lane—found in 1357. As for Stew Lane, its name suggests to some extent its early history, but the sophisticated Londoner should not be led to a possibly wrong conclusion on this account. A stew merely denoted a public bath, for Old London was

equipped even with these, and most were situated by the banks of the Thames. Each bath-house was reserved for one sex only, the other not being admitted. In 1428 we find three such stews for women only, two at Queenhithe and one at Brokenwharf. There was one for men in Seacoal Lane, where not even a washerwoman was allowed to enter. Anyone using such a place for purposes of bathing was said to be "stewed," and in fact the word "stew" applied to any house where heat was generated. A drying-house for leather after it was dyed was so called.

Nevertheless it is evident that public baths always tended to degenerate into houses of ill-fame, for in 1475 we find an order issued from the Guildhall forbidding their keepers to harbour men and women at night. That the stews at Queenhithe were no exception to this process of deterioration is shown by an entry in Machyn's Diary in 1556: "The III day of May did ride in a car about London a woman that dwelt at Queenhithe at the hot house, for a baud."

The stairs which now lead to the water on the eastern side of the little haven of Queenhithe were also there in ancient times. We hear of them being carried away in 1562 by a great tempest which wrecked many houses and boats. In the 15th century there was also a great post there to which the boats were moored, which may be the same of which it is recorded in 1561 that a waterman was tied to it and whipped for using seditious language. In later times goods were unloaded at Queenhithe by means of a crane operated by a large wheel, which was turned by a donkey who trotted inside it. This took place within a timber-built enclosure on the eastern edge of the wharf, and remained until about

1860. Such a type of motive-power was not unknown in London in the 13th and 14th centuries, judging by certain City houses possessing in those times the name of "Horsemill."

In 1357 a special effort was made to rebuild the quay at Queenhithe and to cleanse the entrance to the haven. To raise funds for this purpose a toll was levied on all vessels using the harbour, varying from a penny for a small boat to sixpence for a large ship. Twopence was levied on every twelve quarters of corn, and a penny on every five quarters of salt. The necessity for such a cleansing of the entrance is only in accordance with what we know of the generally filthy condition of the foreshore of the Thames by reason of the rubbish which inevitably got thrown in the water. Not least among the sources of pollution was the refuse from the slaughtering operations of the City butchers. In 1392 Parliament forbade all slaughtering in London, but in the following year, when the citizens complained that this tended to enhance the price of meat, the King relented so far as to allow them one spot on the bank of the river for the purpose. The result may be gathered from a petition of the Armourers in 1481, who sought permission to increase by 10 feet the space of their wharf in Thames Street, near Paul's Wharf, in order to bring its frontage level with the neighbouring wharves. The reason for this was that each succeeding tide left the foreshore covered with the entrails of beasts, causing annoyance not only to them, but to people using a public stair in the vicinity. In 1488 the butchers were forbidden to throw entrails into the water unless they were cut into small pieces.

Old London Bridge was to a certain extent a hindrance

to the prosperity of Queenhithe because the time taken up in raising the drawbridge to let the ships pass through caused many of them to prefer landing their cargoes at Billingsgate, on the other side of the bridge. To avoid this unfair competition a law was made that if only one ship arrived with salt, corn, garlic, onions or fish, it should be compelled to go to Queenhithe, but if two arrived one might land at each port. If any larger number arrived, the odd one should always go to Queenhithe, and if the numbers were even they should be divided between Queenhithe and Billingsgate. The owners were to cast lots to decide which should discharge at either place, and vessels which were too large to go through the drawbridge were to unload into small boats.

As London increased in size and importance so Queenhithe gradually diminished by reason of the great docks which came into being lower down the river. Until sixty or seventy years ago, when the City still possessed a resident population and the prosperous merchant did not disdain to live over his business, the quay was a popular resort on summer evenings when the day's work was done. In those days there was a tavern on its eastern edge, with forms set out in front facing the river, where beneath the shade of a pleasant tree the citizens sat to drink their glass of ale, while the leaders of civic life—for in the 19th century two Lord Mayors had their residence at Queenhithe—took their ease and smoked their long churchwardens in the "parlour." Such a pleasant side of City life has passed away, probably never to return, and Queenhithe has become one of those sleepy backwaters of which it can be truly said that they live in the past rather than the present.

CHAPTER V

THE CITY'S ABBEY

ST. Helen's Church, in Bishopsgate, has often been termed the Westminster Abbey of the City, less perhaps on account of the number of notabilities buried there, although these are considerable, than because other City churches which might have become rival Valhallas perished with their relics in the Great Fire. Unfortunately, when the Reformation came most of the medieval tombs were broken down and cleared out of the churches, thus giving Westminster Abbey an adventitious brilliance, for even Henry VIII did not venture to throw his own ancestors into the street.

Nevertheless, regarded with the eye of historic vision, many lessons from the London life of the past are enshrined in this venerable spot. Even as we approach it we are aware of a circumstance only to be observed in connection with very ancient buildings, for the entrance is several steps below the level of the street, not because it was built that way, but because the street outside has steadily risen throughout the centuries. Were it not that the floor of the church has been raised at each successive restoration we should have to descend 4 feet farther still.

This condition is the result of the work of the London paviours, who, in accordance with the principle that the first need of a great city is firm ways to walk upon, came into existence at a very early period. But in those days

of primitive government it rarely happened that a piece of roadway was remade until its condition became that of a quagmire, and in consequence the paviours, unable to lay heavy stone securely on mud, would first introduce a load of gravel, of which they often used two tons to one of stone. This process has caused the streets to rise about a foot in a century.

A first glance at the interior of the church presents a sight still more remarkable, for it consists merely of a nave and an aisle; and the height of the last named, with its roof on a level with that of the nave, its width, for it is 2 feet 7 inches wider than the nave, and a general bareness as though something had been taken away, lead irresistibly to the conclusion that at one time what is now the nave was the aisle, and what is the aisle was the nave. The explanation, however, is somewhat different, for what we are looking at is really two churches in one—the nave was the parish church and the aisle was the choir of the nuns next door. They were never quite separate buildings, for the arcade is original, and the nuns on one side and the congregation on the other were separated merely by screens running from pier to pier. Thus they solved the difficulty of mutual worship without the intermingling of the religious with the profane. Come closer and let us examine the northern wall of the aisle, the nunnery wall, and we shall see the ancient door of the Priory, now blocked up, the flight of stone stairs in the thickness of the wall, which led to their upper apartments, and most curious of all, the "nuns' squint," or low side window with series of stone bars a few inches apart sloping obliquely to the interior of the church. Turning about, we shall see the reason for this, for the apertures between the

bars point straight to the high altar, so enabling the ladies to watch the service without entering their choir.

The origin of the nunnery is fabulously ascribed to St. Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, but there is no other foundation for the legend than the fact that it stood upon the site of a ruined Roman building. The actual nunnery was, indeed, founded about the year 1212, thus being younger than the neighbouring church, to which it is said the body of St. Edmund, King and Martyr, was brought in 1010, where it remained for three years, until the Danish invasion of East Anglia had subsided.

The Priory church, now the aisle, was built in the 13th century by members of the Basings family, the same who gave their name to Basinghall Street and the ward of Bassishaw. Sir Thomas de Basinges, Sheriff, who died in 1300 and was buried in St. Helen's, claimed in his will that he and his brother were the builders, and left property to the church to furnish money for a distribution of alms each year on the day of his obit—the anniversary of his death. Great St. Helen's occupies part of the close of the monastery, and its entrance was their great gate. Through this close as far as St. Mary Axe was a public right of way from the earliest times, and as long ago as the reign of Edward I disputes arose between the nuns and the citizens owing to the efforts of the former to close it to the public. St. Helen's Place stands on the site of the nuns' refectory or great dining-hall. After the Dissolution it was, with much of the surrounding property, purchased by the Leathersellers' Company and used as their hall in place of the one they had previously occupied in London Wall. Here they remained until 1799, when they pulled it down, built a new hall

somewhat farther east, and constructed St. Helen's Place on the site. The Priory extended along Bishopsgate from Great St. Helen's to the church of St. Ethelburga, the western arch of which is supposed to have been another gateway of the monastery.

St. Helen's was a monastery of great endowments, its property, bequeathed by many benefactors, being situated in all parts of the City. In 1535, when all ecclesiastical property was valued in order to determine how much each should pay for the tenth which Henry VIII then started to exact to support the dignity of his new rôle as head of the Church, the possessions of St. Helen's in London and elsewhere were estimated at £376 6s. a year.

The earliest bequest to St. Helen's found in the London wills is of the year 1271, and concerns property in Cheapside, and more houses were left to them in 1289. In the next century they acquired property in Bishopsgate Street, Cripplegate, where the Rector of Great Massingham in Norfolk left them his house and fourteen shops, Old Fish Street, St. Mary Axe, Cornhill, Budge Row, and many other places. In 1323 one testator left them eightpence to be paid out of the rent of a house in their own parish every year on Shere Thursday, the day before Good Friday, so called because on that day the entire male population had its hair cut in preparation for Easter. Another in 1331 left them 3s. 4d. a year to provide wine for the Easter Communion.

Many of these bequests were for the purpose of founding chantries in the church, and their upkeep being provided for out of valuable property in the City, their founders expected them to be the means of perpetuating their memory for ever, an expectation which might have

been realised had it not been for the Reformation, when all such endowments were confiscated. Every church in London contained these chantries, and St. Helen's a great number, each of which supported its own priest to perform services daily in memory of the founder, with all the paraphernalia of his office. Of what this consisted in a well-equipped chantry may be seen in the will of John de Gisors, a famous 14th-century Mayor. There were to be a chalice, a missal in two volumes, a portifory or service-book, a psalter, a complete set of vestments with a fine linen cope, a pyx to hold the sacrament over the altar, with a cloth or corporas to cover it and a corporas case, three towels, a surplice, two cruets to hold holy oil, a warming-pan, a cloth of silk and gold, and a chest to keep them in.

The foundation of some chantries provided for a special chapel to be built within the church, while others were attached to one of the side altars. Adam Fraunceys, mercer, and Mayor in 1352–3, left to St. Helen's in 1374 property in several parts of the City to found two chantries, one dedicated to the Blessed Mary and one to the Holy Ghost. To make sure that his wishes were carried out he provided that the Prioress and each nun should take oath on the Holy Gospels to fulfil them, and his will contained elaborate directions for the several functions to be performed by the chantry priest and the nuns.

This is an example of the fears ever present in the minds of such aspirants to earthly immortality that the costly arrangements they had made to that end might in course of time be allowed to die out and the money devoted to other purposes. A method frequently adopted to avoid such a contingency was to bequeath

a sum of money to be paid every year to each succeeding Mayor, or other high official, on condition that he personally inspected the work of the chantry and satisfied himself that the donor's wishes were being faithfully carried out. Many medieval Mayors, Sheriffs, Recorders and Chamberlains did not scorn to add to their incomes by accepting these small perquisites, which rarely exceeded 10s. a year. Many provisions of the kind are found in the wills of the citizens, and one of the most curious was in connection with the chantry of one William Cambridge in the church of St. Mary at Hill, who provided that once a year, on the occasion of the celebration of his obit, the Mayor, Sheriffs and Swordbearer should attend in state and be paid 6s. 8d., 3s. 4d. each, and 1s. 8d. respectively, and be regaled with bread and ale. In the churchwardens' accounts these payments are recorded year by year, except in 1479, when we find the entry, "To Robert hardynge and to Robert Byfelde, Sherevis, nothyng payd for they came not." Another perhaps equally curious example is found in a will of 1434, by which the Mayor and Aldermen attending an obit are promised two shillings' worth of mind-bread, six gallons of wine, and a barrel of beer containing thirty gallons.

Another chantry was founded at St. Helen's in 1349 by William de Thorneye, a grocer and Sheriff, who endowed it with £400 to be invested for its support, out of which the Chamberlain and Recorder were to receive 10s. a year to see his wishes fulfilled. He equipped it with a silver-gilt chalice, portifory, psalter and vestments, and to serve as a pyx a cup with a cover of silver-gilt to be suspended over the altar by his silver seal chain.

In the parish churches the pyx, the vessel for holding

the sacrament, was often an object of great beauty, whose rich moulding and ornamentation called forth all the ingenuity of the medieval craftsman. We hear of one in goldsmith's work which constituted a replica in miniature of the Crucifixion as exhibited on the rood-loft in the centre of the church. The pyx was suspended over the altar by a chain or silken ribbon running over a pulley with a weighted plumb at the other end to let it up and down. When not in use it was covered with a cloth called a corporas to screen it from the eyes of the vulgar, but during the Mass it was uncovered, and at one point in the ceremony elevated and worshipped by the congregation, while burning torches fixed on long staves were held aloft to add solemnity to the scene.

Other chantries founded in St. Helen's were one by Walter de Bilyngham in 1349, the officiating priest of which was to be appointed from time to time by the Recorder of London ; another in 1371 by John Andrew ; and another in 1346 by John de Etton, Rector of Great Massingham in Norfolk.

Although so much money and property were thus left to the nuns of St. Helen's with which to carry on their pious work, it is to be feared that at times they lacked the business ability to retain what was rightfully their own. An example of this occurs in connection with a bequest of the year 1353 by John de Causton, a mercer and Sheriff, of houses and land at Eastcheap and Aldgate on condition that out of the revenues a chantry should be maintained in the church of St. Mary at Hill for the good of his soul. It was provided that if the nuns allowed the property to fall into such a state of disrepair that it failed to yield sufficient income for this purpose,

then the churchwardens and parishioners of St. Mary's should have power to step in and take it for themselves. Sure enough, when in 1477 the churchwardens' accounts of St. Mary's are resumed after a blank interval of about fifty years they are found in possession of the entire property, but how long this had been it is impossible to say. Some years later the nuns started an action for its recovery, but the churchwardens, by resorting to every trick known to the law, were successful in outwitting them.

The churchwardens' accounts show their first proceeding to be an application to the Guildhall for a copy of John de Causton's will, for which they paid 6s. 8d. to the clerk of the Mayor's Court, besides distributing various sums among the officers and serjeants of the Guildhall. Two of their number then proceeded to Westminster to interview one of the judges, their expenses for this journey amounting to 2s. 3d. Next we arrive at the significant entry of 13s. 4d. paid to the "lourd cheff Juge" and Lord Bryant, followed by the payment of 4s. 10d. for "on thynge and othere," which went towards a dinner given to the same two judges. In the following year, 1492, we find the litigation still going on, when the churchwardens opened the ball with a present of thirty-two gallons of malmsey to Lord Bryant and Lord Hussy, which cost them tenpence a gallon. Later on they sent a goose, two rabbits and a dozen larks, together with a pottel of Rhenish wine to the same two lords at Ely Place in Holborn. In 1493 they sent four dishes of meat to Lord Bryant and Lord Hussy, and on May 1st in the same year 20s. in cash as a "reward." This seems to be the end of the litigation, and the parishioners of St. Mary's are found in possession of

the property for years afterwards, and apparently until the Reformation.

That this mode of conducting legal business was not an isolated case is shown on another occasion when the churchwardens of the same church had occasion to pay 2s. to "serten of the Jewry to make them drynke." Nevertheless, every now and then, when knowledge of such acts in the City courts came to the ears of the Mayor, strong measures would be taken to repress them. In 1466 a man convicted of bribing jurors was carried through the City on a horse without a saddle, placed on the pillory on Cornhill with a paper on his head proclaiming his offence, and discharged from all manner of "offices of worship" in the City.

In the 13th century St. Helen's was the annual meeting-place of a society whose history affords an insight into one of the most curious sides of London life in the early middle ages. In those days there was no more clubbable race of people than the citizens of London, for any group of persons who happened to possess some interest in common promptly formed themselves into a fraternity. Such fraternities were usually of a religious nature, and consisted of a number of persons residing in the same parish who united together to form a guild of their own within the parish church apart from the rest of the congregation. They would adopt a patron saint, have their own priest with vestments, books and plate, and appoint one of their number as warden to keep their accounts separately from those of the churchwardens. Citizens belonged to such fraternities independently of their membership of a trade guild by virtue of which they were freemen of London, notwithstanding that each such trade guild was also attached to

one of the parish churches, where it had its own vestments and plate, and often its own priest. An example of such a religious fraternity was that of Salve Regina in the church of St. Magnus at London Bridge, which has recently been revived, for they were, of course, all suppressed at the Reformation. In the same church were other fraternities dedicated to Our Lady and to St. Thomas the Martyr ; in St. Mary at Hill were fraternities of St. Christopher, St. Katherine and St. Anne ; and in St. Michael Cornhill of Jesus, Our Lady, St. Christopher, St. George, St. Anne and St. Michael.

Sometimes societies were formed by reason of a community of interests of another kind, such as in the case of the rectors of the parish churches, who formed in the 14th century a fraternity of Parish Priests, with no other object apparently than that of organising charity. Of a similar kind was a fraternity in the church of St. Lawrence, Jewry, formed for the purpose of providing wax candles to burn before the cross in the church, and another with the same object was the fraternity of the Roodlight in St. Giles, Cripplegate. The roodlight was a series of five wax candles in commemoration of the five wounds of Christ, mounted on a beam in front of the rood, and hence often known as the beamlight. Its expense was usually supported by a special collection among the congregation.

In St. Paul's was a brotherhood of Jesus, the members of which on ceremonial occasions wore black satin hoods, with the device of I.H.S. upon them. The Dean of St. Paul's was their rector, and they maintained a chapel in the cathedral called Jesus Chapel, which, after they were suppressed at the Reformation, became the church

of St. Faith. Jesus' bells in St. Paul's Churchyard were named after them.

Other citizens, in order to participate to the greatest possible extent in the life of religion without actually throwing up their business and becoming monks, became "capitular" brothers of a monastery, or, as we should call it, honorary members. Thus a glover, buried in the church of St. Magnus in 1349, describes himself in his will as belonging to the monasteries of Christchurch, or Holy Trinity, Aldgate, and St. Mary of Southwark, the present St. Saviour's Cathedral.

Perhaps the most curious fraternity which has been met with was that known as the Society of the Pui, a musical society established in the 13th century by French merchants in London as a branch of their home fraternity in Puy en Velay, but to which Englishmen were also admitted. Their objects as stated in the society's rules were: "The increasing of loyal love and to the end that mirthfulness, peace, honesty, joyousness, gaiety, and good love may be maintained, and to the end that all blessings may be set before us and all evils cast behind." Like other guilds, their rules included the attendance of the members at the marriages or funerals of their fellows. They had a chapel within the precinct of St. Martin le Grand, where they attended service once a year, carrying a wax candle weighing fifty pounds. The entrance fee to the society was sixpence, and at the annual festival each member had either to sing a new song of his own composition or to forfeit a shilling. Those who were ready with new songs sang them from a platform covered with cloth of gold, and he whose song was adjudged the best, a question decided by a small committee of two or three members with an expert

knowledge of such matters, was crowned with a gilded chaplet, and his song, written out clearly and in full, was hung on the wall of the room. A curious rule in force on these occasions is reminiscent of some of our modern secret societies, for if the presence of any stranger were discovered in the room all singing was suspended until he had either been ejected or induced to join.

The society was governed by a chief known as the Prince, chosen yearly on the same occasion, and also crowned, after which a feast was held at which their artistic temperaments, scorning the baser lusts of the flesh, were served with nothing more luxurious than soup, meat, cheese, good bread, good ale and good wine. The festivity ended with a procession on horseback through the streets to conduct the new Prince to his home, arrived at which the members dismounted, executed a dance, had one drink more, and departed each to his own home. No ladies were admitted to these functions, for the curious reason that their absence would be a lesson to the members to honour, cherish and commend all ladies as much in their absence as in their presence, which sounds no more than a base excuse for excluding them.

It was on the day following the feast that they held a general meeting of the society at St. Helen's Priory in Bishopsgate Street, when they settled the accounts for the year and sang a solemn mass for the souls of deceased members. Towards the end of the 13th century they appear to have been the founders of the Guildhall chapel, where they maintained a chaplain to perform divine service. In 1299 Henry le Galeys, a famous Mayor of London, who founded the Conduit

and the Stocks Market, endowed the chapel with five marks a year, and in 1304 a man who was sued in the courts gave them £5 towards it as a penalty. This is the last we hear of the Society of the Pui, but their chapel, once removed, in 1430, to a slightly different site, remained as the chapel of the Guildhall until late in the 18th century.

Although they probably died out early in the 14th century, their extinction did not leave London without successors to carry on the tradition and the practice of music and song throughout the middle ages. These were the Parish Clerks, who by their performances given at the Clerks' Well, north of the City, achieved the honour of giving their name to an important district of London.

They were licensed as a guild as early as 1233, and although they progressed so far as to possess a hall of their own, the position of which is still marked by Clarks Place in Bishopsgate Street, they were really only one of the supplementary fraternities alluded to above, and not recognised as a London trade guild, for until 1443 each member belonged to his own trade guild as well as to the fraternity of St. Nicholas, or the Parish Clerks. The most probable reason for this is that the members were the choristers of the parish churches, following some other trade as well as singing in the church. In the above year they are styled in the records "good men of the community of the principal and chief clerks of the parish and collegiate churches of the City." When we find that in the 15th century the wages paid to a clerk of the church was only about a shilling a week, without the board and lodging which generally accompanied such a wage when paid to a workman, it is obvious that no

man could have obtained a living with singing as his sole occupation. But towards the end of the 15th and beginning of the 16th centuries the wages of choristers, owing to the increasing public interest in church music, went up by leaps and bounds, until by about 1529 we find them receiving as much as £10 a year.

Here it seems we have the reason why in 1443 they were able to approach the Mayor to be recognised as a regular City guild and to have all their members formally transferred to the new company. They started with a membership of twenty-eight, and paid £20 to have them all transferred from the companies to which they had originally belonged. Any further members joining were to pay a reasonable sum for admission, and were to be actually working as parish clerks. As they were not a trade or craft, they were not allowed to take apprentices to be taught their calling, but a saving clause permitted them to take apprentices to be taught the calling of their wives. In return for their new privileges they agreed to maintain a priest (this was afterwards increased to two priests), complete with bread, wine, wax, books, vestments and chalice, in the chapel of the Guildhall, a circumstance which constitutes yet another link between them and the ancient Society of the Pui. They are still found celebrating in the chapel of the Guildhall in the reign of Elizabeth.

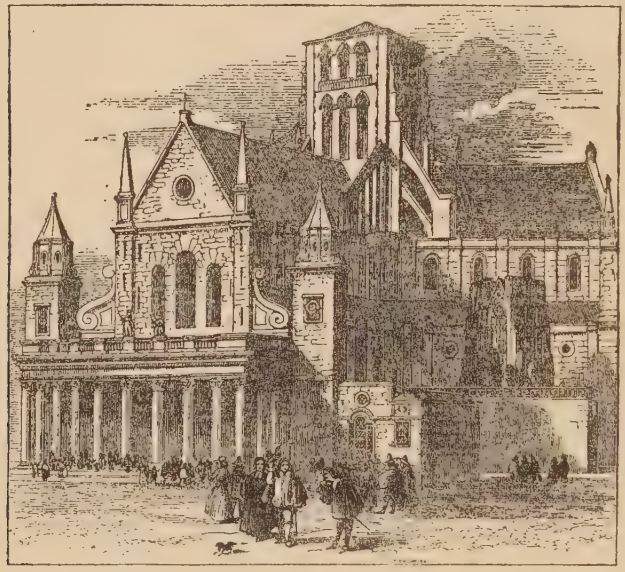
At the same period the Parish Clerks were often engaged by the churches to augment their ordinary choir at important celebrations. On St. Barnabas's Day in 1509 the churchwardens' accounts of St. Mary at Hill record the payment of 5s. to the Parish Clerks, besides 1s. 3d. for bread, wine and ale to refresh them. On such occasions as St. Barnabas's Day, or Corpus Christi

Day, when processions were formed to parade round the church or the parish, the Clerks would attend in their surplices and wear garlands of roses and lavender on their heads. They also joined in the general processions of the clergy through the streets of the City, when the great crosses were brought out from the churches, and, headed by the Bishop of London and the Mayor and Aldermen, the entire ecclesiastical body in their most gorgeous raiment would afford a spectacle which transformed the squalor of the streets into a feast of colour and beauty. They were often engaged to sing at the annual feasts of the livery companies, as in 1561, when they appeared at the Grocers' feast.

The Parish Clerks were often in great demand at funerals, and in the 16th century no really smart funeral was complete without them. Thus in 1481 Sir Bartholomew James, Mayor in 1479, provided in his will that they should " be at condveyng of his body to the church and to attend mass," for on these occasions they were practically in charge of the ceremony, dressed in their surplices and singing all the way from the house to the grave and during the interment. It is recorded that in 1550 they had the conduct of the funeral of Lady Judd, wife of Sir Andrew Judd, at St. Helen's.

Several Mayors of London were buried in St. Helen's, and it is possible that if all their burial-places were known, many more names could be added. The first we hear of was Adam Fraunceys, Mayor in 1352–3, who died in 1374 ; then Sir William Holles, died 1542 ; Sir Andrew Judd, 1558, founder of the grammar school at Tonbridge and of almshouses in Great St. Helen's ; Sir Thomas Gresham, founder of the Royal Exchange, died 1579: his helmet is still preserved on a bracket

above the tomb. Others were Sir John Spencer, died 1609 ; Sir Martin Lumley, Mayor in 1623 ; and Sir John Lawrence, Mayor during the Great Plague, who died in 1692. Sir John Crosby is also buried there with his first wife. He was the builder of Crosby Place on land which he leased from the Priory in 1466 for a



OLD ST. PAUL'S

period of ninety-nine years. It was burnt in the Great Fire, with the exception of the hall, which remained facing Bishopsgate Street until 1909, when it was taken down and re-erected at Chelsea.

An event in the history of St. Helen's reminds us of the privilege of sanctuary accorded to felons by the churches in the middle ages. It was in 1324 that a man and a woman took refuge there after murdering a chaplain in a house hard by. Immediately the Coroner and

Sheriffs, as was their duty, came to parley with them, but refusing to surrender, they came out as far as the churchyard gate, the limit of the sanctuary, and demanded to be allowed to abjure the realm. This, by medieval law, was not to be denied them, and accordingly they were assigned the port of Dover at which to embark for foreign parts, the man being ordered to proceed there by way of Dartford, Newington and Canterbury, with permission to stop at each place for the night, and the woman, allowed an extra day on account of her sex, by way of Dartford, Rochester, Sittingbourne and Canterbury. The right of sanctuary was not destroyed by the Reformation, but remained in force until 1624, when it was abolished by statute.

St. Helen's may be regarded as the typical medieval church, and sitting in its dimly lit interior filled with the earthen smell of ancient walls, heightened probably by its half-sunken position, the altar-tombs with their recumbent figures adding solemnity to the scene, we can reconstruct in imagination the gorgeously painted rood-loft with its great crucifix and the Mary and John on either side, and its waxen lights, the high altar with its painted canopy and curtains, and the glow of silver-gilt plate and jewelled crosses as they existed before the Reformation, when the full glory of the church was constantly exhibited for the entertainment of the people.

CHAPTER VI

THE FLEET RIVER

THE march of civilisation, or rather the growth of a great city, for presumably they are not in all respects the same, has not only replaced the undulating beauty of the banks of Thames with buildings of dubious aspect, overthrown our ancient monuments, and polluted the very air we breathe, but has even choked our streams and so completely buried them out of sight that the memory of the course they ran tends to become a thing of the past. Lately a suggestion has actually been made to cover the Thames itself to make a broad highway through the centre of London, and it seems excusable to rejoice that the funds for such an undertaking are not likely to be forthcoming.

How many people, walking on their daily business up and down Farringdon Street, stop to remember that they are treading the course of a once famous London river—the Fleet? It was a real river and more than a ditch, for vessels laden with oysters, herrings and similar merchandise were able to navigate its course as far as Holborn Bridge, where the Viaduct now crosses the road.

At that time it was a tidal river rising from numerous springs at Hampstead, and although never within historical times sufficiently deep to accommodate large vessels, formed an admirable harbour for fishing-boats and barges. Its name of the Fleet River was confined to that part between Holborn Bridge and the Thames,

the higher reaches being known indifferently as Turnmill Brook, the Holebourne, and the River of Wells.

The contrast between what is now a mere drain emptying into the Thames and the tidal estuary of the Fleet as it existed in the 14th century is well illustrated by an event recorded in 1338. Two Florentine merchants, having been robbed by five highwaymen between Romford and Brentwood, followed them to London, and started at sunrise the following morning to search the City for them. The robbers having separated on reaching London, the merchants came up with one of them, named John the Brewer, near Paul's Wharf, who to make his escape plunged into the river, which was at low tide, with the object of wading along the foreshore of the Thames and the Fleet as far as Fleet Bridge, from where he could make good his escape out of London. The robber, however, was caught by the rising tide and drowned, and his body, washed into the estuary of the Fleet, was left high and dry on its western bank. Another case is found in the same year, when a man bathing in the Thames at Haywharf, near All-hallows the Great in Upper Thames Street, was drowned and carried round by the tide to the same spot.

The course of the Fleet from Holborn Bridge to its mouth was outside the City wall, which until 1278 ran down what is now the Old Bailey, from Newgate to Ludgate, and from Ludgate due south to the river. In the above year the wall south of Ludgate was pulled down in consequence of the building of the Blackfriars monastery, which would otherwise have been cut in half by it. A scheme was then formed for rebuilding the wall from Ludgate along what is now the south side of Ludgate Hill as far as the Fleet River, and then to

turn it at right angles southward along the present New Bridge Street to the Thames, thus enclosing the monastery. To raise funds for this purpose a special tax called murage was levied on all goods brought into the City by strangers for a period of three years, but only that part of the wall along Ludgate Hill was completed at the time, the part along New Bridge Street still remaining unwalled in 1315, when a further murage was imposed to complete it.

In early times three other bridges spanned the Fleet below Holborn Bridge—Fleet Lane Bridge, near the present Memorial Hall; Fleet Bridge, connecting Fleet Street and Ludgate Hill, and another just near the mouth between Bridewell Palace and the monastery of Blackfriars, buildings which stood on either side of the present New Bridge Street, almost where Blackfriars Bridge starts. There was, of course, no Ludgate Circus then, or even a Ludgate Hill, and the whole street from Temple Bar across Fleet Bridge and down to the Old Bailey was known as Fleet Street.

When first the Fleet River comes within the ken of official records it had already been canalised in its lower part, which accounts for its straight course along Farringdon Street and Bridge Street. Seacoal Lane, a turning out of Farringdon Street on the right going from Ludgate Circus, marks the position of a wharf where coal was unloaded. Up to the end of the 14th century coal was little used in London except for manufacturing purposes ; charcoal was the usual domestic heating agent, and for this reason it was customary to distinguish them as " charcoal " and " seacoal." The name " seacoal " is an indication of the state of the roads in the middle ages ; it was so called because it was always

brought to London by water, land transport for such a heavy article being impossible.

This quay by Seacoal Lane was the public property of the City, and in 1343 the Mayor granted the use of it to the butchers of St. Nicholas Shambles in Newgate Street. The butchers had always been a source of trouble to the authorities by reason of the nuisance arising from their slaughtering, and it was thought that this difficulty would be overcome if the piece of ground in question was leased to them for the purpose of cleaning the carcases and entrails in the waters of Fleet. The terms of the lease were that the butchers should keep the quay in repair and present the Mayor with a specimen of that favourite dish, a boar's head, every Christmas.

By 1354 fresh trouble arose over this new arrangement, for the Prior of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, just beyond Smithfield, complained to the King that the quay at Seacoal Lane had been his property from ancient times, from which the Mayor had wrongfully ousted him, and that the stench arising from the operations of the butchers was so foul as to endanger the health of the prisoners in the Fleet Prison.

The Fleet Prison was a little farther along Farringdon Street. The present Memorial Hall stands partly on its site. Mention of it is found as early as the 12th century, at which time it was surrounded by a ditch filled by the waters of the Fleet, thus converting it into an island site. But by 1356 this ditch had become so stagnant and contaminated, with consequent mortality among the prisoners, that a commission was appointed and sat at St. Bride's Church in Fleet Street to report upon its condition. The result shows that in former times the ditch had been 10 feet broad, and of sufficient

depth to float a vessel freighted with a tun of wine, and that its banks were covered with trees.

It is a curious fact that the principal prisons of Old London were situated at the western boundary of the City. They were the Fleet, Newgate and Ludgate. It is true that the compters of the Sheriffs were in the centre of the City, and that at times even their private houses were used as temporary prisons, but all these were of a minor character. A citizen arrested on any charge short of felony or treason could elect to go to the Sheriffs' compter instead of to Newgate or Ludgate, and would be charged for his accommodation 4d., 6d., 8d., or 1s. a week, according to his means. Besides the Sheriffs' compters there were various other places of detention in the City used for temporary purposes. Among these was the well-known Tun on Cornhill, to which the Watch conveyed suspicious persons found prowling the streets during the night. There was also a place described as a compter at Billingsgate, where the Bailiff of that port used to detain strangers coming from overseas until the port dues were paid. At the Guildhall was a detention-room for unruly apprentices, which went by the significant name of "Little Ease," where, being unable to stand, sit or lie down in comfort, a few hours usually sufficed to bring the youngster to his senses.

The modern idea of supplying a prisoner with his board and lodging and then making him work to earn them had not occurred to our forefathers. Prison was merely the restriction of one's usual liberty, and the subject of it had to keep himself as best he could with the handicap so imposed. From this point of view it was quite logical to put the prison in charge of a gaoler who paid for his post and reaped his profit by selling to

the inmates the things they were bound to have to keep them alive. Those who found themselves in prison for no very serious offence, perhaps for debt or for breaking some trade regulation, or for too freely criticising the Mayor or Aldermen, could, if they were able to afford it, have a chamber to themselves, and even have their own bed brought there in return for a fee. Otherwise they could have a bed from the gaoler at a penny a night, or a simple couch at a penny a week. After Newgate prison was rebuilt in 1423 out of funds bequeathed by Richard Whittington, the inmates received permission to buy most of their commodities where they pleased. The gaoler could supply them with charcoal for a fire at twopence a bushel, leaving him a profit of a halfpenny. Beer, the universal drink, could only be obtained at the prison tap at twopence a gallon, and it cost the gaoler three-halfpence. Water, however, was not laid on to Ludgate and Newgate until 1436, and then it was only the overflow from the Priory of St. Bartholomew, granted by the monks out of charity.

The prisoner could make a further payment to the gaoler to avoid being placed in irons, provided he gave sureties for good behaviour. Otherwise this treatment was meted out not only to persons convicted of felony, but to those imprisoned for a debt of large amount. The gaoler could also exact a fee of fourpence from each inmate towards the general lighting expenses of the prison. The case of those prisoners who were destitute of funds was desperate indeed ; they were all herded together in the cellars. Even when Newgate was rebuilt in 1423 in the best style known to the authorities, it was admitted that the conditions arising from the cellar were likely to be so bad that infection would be spread among the

better-class prisoners if steps were not taken to provide them with some allowance of fresh air. Accordingly, in return for further fees to the gaoler, they were provided with two large rooms for purposes of recreation, and were also allowed to take the air on the roof, for the latter privilege specially enjoined to pray for the soul of Richard Whittington.

A further fee was exacted by the gaoler from each prisoner on his discharge—eightpence in a case of debt and 2s. in a case of felony. Any unable to pay must remain in prison, notwithstanding he was officially a free man, and it is due to so many being in this pitiable position that we find bequests such as that of a citizen in 1514, who left money to pay for the release of twelve destitute prisoners in the King's Bench, Marshalsea, Newgate and Ludgate.

Many such charitable bequests are found in the London wills, usually taking the form of assistance to poor prisoners during the period of their incarceration to keep them from starvation, but the inadequacy of such efforts is shown by several entries in the coroners' rolls of the inmates dying from this cause. The City authorities also, short of altering the law, did what they could to assist them by ruling that many kinds of food, notably fish, butter and cheese, when confiscated for one cause and another, should be sent to Newgate and Ludgate. A certain number of the inmates were also allowed to go out into the City streets to beg on behalf of their fellows, provided with a box and saucer marked with an official mark to obviate fraud. They were chained together in couples to prevent their escape. In order to avoid the danger of the boxes being opened by the gaolers and their contents abstracted, they were kept

sealed and periodically opened by the Sheriffs, who spent the money on food and other necessaries for the prisoners after giving a gratuity to the collectors.

Time after time the authorities endeavoured to suppress extortion on the part of the gaolers, and would occasionally dismiss one as an example when their conduct became too notorious. In 1421 they took the best step possible for the suppression of extortion in abolishing the system by which the gaolers had until then been compelled to pay a fee to the Sheriffs for the exercise of their office. Nevertheless, they still had to pay something for their private accommodation, as is found in 1479, when the keeper of Ludgate was charged 40s. a year for his house near the prison, and was bound, in addition, to keep it in repair. A further step forward, so far as the better-class prisoners were concerned, was made in 1463, when it was decreed that in all the prisons and compters an inclusive charge should be made for board and lodging of 3s. a week for a gentleman, freeman or freewoman, and 2s. for anyone of the estate of a yeoman. To enforce this rule four inspectors or visitors were appointed, two clerical and two lay, to enter the prisons at any time to hear complaints of overcharge, with power to fine any gaoler offending 20s. for the first offence, 40s. for the second, and at the third offence to discharge him from keeping the prison for a period of five years. These visitors were to be changed yearly, and for the first year the appointment fell to the Rectors of Allhallows, Honey Lane, and Allhallows the Great, with two laymen whose names have not been recorded.

Fleet Prison was a prison of the King, and did not belong to the City authorities, who had no right to interfere there except with the King's permission. In

1459 we find a man committed there by the Bishop of Winchester, Lord Chancellor, as the result of an action brought against him in the King's Court at the Tower. Its precinct was from early times a place of privilege, a sort of Alsatia. In 1303, when the Court of Aldermen investigated the burglary of the King's Treasury at Westminster, they included in their report an account of nightly meetings held in a house in the close of Fleet Prison, at which eating and drinking continued until midnight, after which the conspirators would betake themselves armed to Westminster and return the following night. After two nights they failed to return at all, by reason of which they were suspected of complicity in the robbery. It was in consequence of this privileged position that by the 18th century it became notorious as a London Gretna Green, where clandestine marriages were solemnised. A notice was exhibited announcing "Marriages performed here" beneath a device of two hands joined, and a tout on the pavement recommended passers-by to try their luck in the wedded state. It was finally closed in 1842, and its seventy inmates transferred to other prisons. For a time the premises were used as the City stoneyard, until part of it was sold to the London, Chatham and Dover Railway, and later on the Memorial Hall was built on the remainder of the site.

In early times the greater part of the banks of the Fleet from where is now Blackfriars Bridge, up Farringdon Street to Holborn Viaduct, was occupied by wharves and quays. We first hear of a residence there in 1272, when one John Albin bequeathed to his son his house upon Fleet, and by 1280 a capper was established there with a tenement and wharf near the prison, whose

presence is accounted for by the facility of scouring his "hures" in the water. Hures were shaggy caps made of sheep's wool and dyed with various bright colours, of which scarlet was one. In the course of manufacture they had to be fulled like cloth, a process performed by hand with earth and water. Fulling by the feet produced inferior work, and the Hurers were not allowed to make use of the mills belonging to the fullers of cloth, which were situated at Wandsworth, Old Ford, Stratford and Enfield, because the caps being mixed with the cloth would crush and tear it. The overseers of the Hurers often prosecuted those who produced badly fulled caps, and in such a case in 1391 they were found to have been oiled with grease, which, becoming rank and putrid, had caused them to stink when offered for sale.

In the middle ages any such goods confiscated on the ground of being unfit for use were burnt in the public streets, adding one more to the amenities of life in London at the period. At various times, besides caps, we find treated in this way gloves, nets, baskets, blankets, fish and meat; but perhaps the worst example from the point of view of the inhabitants must have been that recorded in 1471, when a shipload of treacle, after being condemned as putrid by a number of physicians and apothecaries, was divided into three and burnt at Cheapside, the crossroads by Leadenhall, and Tower Street.

The above-mentioned capper, who, by reason of having his residence and wharf on the banks of the Fleet, acquired the name of John de Flete, is an interesting example of the method of origin of many Old London surnames, especially as his descendants for several generations afterwards can be traced with the same name,

although having migrated to other parts of the City. Most surnames, although not all, originated in the 13th and 14th centuries, and great numbers of trade-names which will readily occur to the reader can still be found in the London Directory. Some of their derivations, however, are obscure, owing to the fact that at the period of their formation many trades were called by their Norman-French names. For nearly three hundred years after the Conquest the Norman tongue was the fashionable language, and consequently, in addition to those who possessed Norman names by descent there were those of English extraction who, having risen in the world, wanted to possess one. Thus it was that in early times most surnames were prefixed by "de" or "le," a practice which dropped out some time between 1370 and 1380. So far as trade-names are concerned, their Norman-French forms have given rise to many London family names, as, for example, Foster, one derivation of which is from the Fusters, or makers of the wooden parts of saddles, who were settled in Foster Lane, Cheapside. Such trade-names in early London sometimes exhibit a singular appropriateness, as in Quelhogge, a pork butcher, so called from his pig-sticking propensities. As late as 1557 we find a man named Bowier still following the occupation of a bowyer.

Among many other curious trade-names current in London in the 13th and 14th centuries, and still to be found in the London Directory, may be mentioned: Kempster, a woolcomber; Lavender, a laundryman; Waite, a member of the City minstrels; Parmenter, a dealer in broadcloth; Chaloner, a maker of blankets; Ganter, a glover; Cosson and Cossor, horse-dealers; Lorimer, a maker of the metal fittings of harness;

Marshal, a farrier ; Plumer, a feathermonger ; Bedell, (Thomas le Bedel, otherwise called Thomas Bedell, 1316) ; and, most curious of all, Stockfish, a dried-fish merchant.

There was always a glorious uncertainty in the descent of family names, even down to the end of the 15th century. In 1348 a man was known as Edward de St. John because he lived at the Priory of St. John of Jerusalem, but a few years later we find his widow and children taking the surname of Edward. Similarly in 1349 the two daughters of Amiel de Honesden, a chandler, took the names respectively of Amyel and La Chaundeller. The full Christian names and surnames of individuals, written with the greatest care, we should expect to find, if anywhere, in a list of tenants from whom rent had to be collected, and yet in the churchwardens' accounts of St. Mary at Hill until the end of the 15th century many of their tenants are never mentioned by name at all. Thus we find year after year entries of rent received from " the bedrede man," or the bedridden man, from " the two widows," " the weaver's wife," and " the brewer's sister." Another who rented a garden is first of all entered as " A. Gardyner," and afterwards as " the gardiner next to Richard a Kitchen." There was also " the tailor next to the garden gate," who, in subsequent entries, is further abbreviated to " the taylor ther nextt." His real name never appears. In the same way and at the same period in the churchwardens' accounts of St. Michael Cornhill, a woman buried there is called simply " the woman that was servant to Russ," the latter being one of the parishioners. A man who had occasion to pay them quite a large sum of money received no more

formal name than "the cutler that married Swan's wife."

Turning again to the London Directory, we find several names founded on those of London churches. Among such are Mildred; Magnus; Woolnough (St. Mary Woolnoth); Helen, Hellen, Elen and Ellen, all varieties of St. Helen; Dunstan; Benett; and Benetfink, a church which formerly stood in Threadneedle Street at the end of Finch Lane. Many such names owe their origin to the circumstance that their first bearer was a "clerk" of the church, and it seems unlikely, especially in the case of feminine names, that they arose by the well-known process of turning a font name into a surname. There is yet a further explanation of the origin of church names in the ancient practice of taking foundlings into the nearest parish church for baptism and endowing them with the name of the church for a surname. This process can be seen in operation in the churchwardens' accounts of St. Mildred in the Poultry.

When we consider the great number of trade-names which have survived to the present day in easily recognisable forms, it is strange to note how few are still to be found in the Directory derived from streets and other spots in ancient London, although in the 13th and 14th centuries many citizens took their surnames in this way. However, we still have among us a Bradstreet (the ancient spelling of Broad Street), a Conduit, a Cornhill, a Holborn and a Walbrook, besides Fleet or Flett, one derivation of which is undoubtedly the name with which we started.

Above Holborn Bridge the Fleet River glided through many meandering ways from its source. Turnmill Street, near Farringdon Street Station, marks the spot

on its banks where stood a water-mill, the property of the Priory of St. John of Jerusalem. The Bishop of Ely's garden, where grew the famous strawberries mentioned by Shakespear, reached as far as this from Ely Place, Holborn. Further north it ran through Clerkenwell, where it is identical with Stow's "River of Wells," a name it acquired by reason of the great number of springs found all over the locality. One of these was the Clerks' Well, where the religious plays were performed by the society of the Parish Clerks of London. It is said to be still existing beneath a house in Ray Street.

The history of the Fleet River marks the spread of the population of London, for whereas in Roman, Saxon and Norman times it was, as we have seen, navigable as far as Holborn Bridge, complaints of its choking up and evil condition begin early in the 14th century, and continue for hundreds of years, with many attempts, always abortive, to bring it back to its pristine condition.

The rulers of Old London were never sufficiently far-seeing to regulate the City's development, but allowed it to grow up where and how it pleased. The result of this haphazard method was that each individual consulted only his own interests, and anyone to whom for business or private reasons running water was important would make the fullest use of it without regard to the comfort or convenience of his neighbours. The London tanners were perhaps the worst sinners in this respect, and we usually find complaints of their activities foremost in any discussion of the troubles arising from the Fleet River. Moreover, in the absence during early times of any drainage system, any householder who had access to a stream, whether the Fleet, the Walbrook or the

Thames itself, rarely failed to erect his household convenience over the water.

These two failings form the gravamen of most of the complaints of the condition of the Fleet River, starting with the first in 1307, made by the Earl of Lincoln in a Parliament held at Carlisle. Another complaint made at this time was of the mills erected by the Templars near Baynards Castle, just east of Blackfriars, to be worked by the tide, these having the effect of keeping

A "HOT HOUSE," OR STEW

the water of the Thames from flowing into the estuary. Ultimately the Constable of the Tower was ordered, with the assistance of the Mayor and Sheriffs, to clear away the tanneries and anything else which tended to contaminate the Fleet.

In 1502 an effort was made to scour the bed from Holborn Bridge to the mouth, and for a time boats were able as of old to bring up victuals and hold their market. This reform lasting only for a time, a new idea was conceived in 1589, to wit, that if more streams at

Hampstead could be diverted so as to flow into it, such a method would be more effective than scouring its bed. For this purpose a fund of a thousand marks was raised by a special tax on the citizens, but the result was failure. Again, in 1652 fresh efforts to clean it were made, but after the fire of 1666, when the citizens were filled with enthusiasm for rebuilding and edifying their city, it was thoroughly scoured and cleaned, and new wharves and landing-stages built along its course. It was then re-opened under the title of the New Canal.

From this time forward its condition went from bad to worse, and it became the refuse-heap for dead cats and dogs and every other kind of filth. Many persons who had the misfortune to fall into it were smothered in its slime, and its horrors have been celebrated by Defoe, Pope and Gay.

The ancient Fleet Market, where the boats ascending the stream had sold their oysters, herrings, corn and other victuals from time immemorial, occupied both banks from Holborn Bridge to Fleet Prison. Here in 1737 was an opportunity for the rulers of the City to kill two birds with one stone. At that time, when the Mansion House was newly built, it became necessary to remove the old Stocks Market which since the 13th century had flourished in the open space there, and so the course of the Fleet was entirely covered over from Holborn Bridge to Blackfriars, and the Stocks Market bodily removed and united with the Fleet Market.

The Fleet River has not altogether departed from us. Though covered in and utilised for nothing more worthy than a sewer, it still takes its muddy and sluggish course down to the Thames, which it enters through a culvert of brick 12 feet high and 18 broad beneath Blackfriars Bridge.

CHAPTER VII

THE OLD GRASS MARKET

THE name of Allhallows Grascherche, or " in the Grass Market," is an interesting example of interchange of nomenclature, for while the church gave its name to Gracechurch Street, the street, or the market held in it, gave its name to the church. In London there were many churches dedicated to Allhallows, or All Saints—Allhallows the More and the Less, Allhallows Barking and Allhallows Staining ; but the church of that name in Lombard Street was known throughout the middle ages as Allhallows Grascherche. It is now often called the hidden church by reason of the surrounding buildings which almost exclude it from view, but these were not built until 1456, on ground which until then had formed part of Allhallows churchyard. It was in this churchyard and the remainder of the open space which constituted the cross-roads and was known by the name of " the four corners " that the grass market was held. It was essentially a street market, without roof or market buildings, where the corn was sold direct from the laden carts which brought it from the country, or from the cobbled road on which it was dumped. On this account it is often referred to as " The Pavement of Grascherche." It extended in one direction across from Allhallows Church to St. Benet's Church on the south corner of Fenchurch Street, at which end was the herb market, and in the other direction down Lombard Street to the church of St. Edmund King and Martyr.

In the middle ages there was nothing extraordinary in holding a market in a churchyard, and at Allhallows the possibility was not excluded of burials taking place at the same spot. Whereas in 1379 we hear that all freemen cornmongers were ordered to take their stand under the wall of the church, which was, as now, north of the churchyard, in order to keep them separate from the strange dealers, in 1422 the burial is recorded of one John Buke between two elms which grew in the churchyard.

In the records there is naturally very scant mention of these elm-trees, but such as there is appears to indicate not only that they were sufficiently conspicuous to be regarded as a sort of local landmark, but that they had the luck to escape destruction in the Great Fire of London. Besides the reference of 1422 as mentioned above, there is a deed of 1732, quoted by the late Mr. F. G. Hilton Price,[1] in which the parish is called "All Saints in the Elms," from which it can only be concluded that the trees were still there at that date. The John Buke who was buried between them in 1422 was a tailor by trade, and bequeathed a brewery in the parish, called "The Skut on the Hoop," to the Company of Merchant Tailors, out of the rent of which they were to pay £6 16s. 8d. a year to maintain a chantry in the church for the good of the souls of himself and his three wives, and to provide wax candles to burn before a picture of the Trinity which hung in the church. Not many years later, in 1450, the churchwardens accused the parson of appropriating the money to his own use instead of spending it in the manner intended.

In the middle ages there were four corn-markets in

[1] *The Signs of Old Lombard Street*, p. 97.

London—Billingsgate, Queenhithe, Grascherche and Newgate Street. The two first-named were for the sale of corn of all kinds as it was landed from the boats, and the others for corn coming by land—at Grascherche the grain that entered the City by London Bridge and Aldgate, and at Newgate the grain entering by way of Newgate and Aldersgate. All kinds of grain were known under the generic title of " grass," and hence the men who dealt in it were called " bladers." This name, if not peculiar to London, was sufficiently strange elsewhere as to lead to some confusion even in the 14th century, when a cutler from York took up the freedom of London in that trade under the impression that they were the same as the bladesmiths.

Among the commodities sold at the market were wheat, oats, barley, rye, hay, malt, herbs, cheese and nuts. On these market tolls were charged, varying from a halfpenny on a cartload of corn to twopence on a cartload of cheese. Corn which was brought on horseback was charged a farthing on being unloaded and placed on the ground, but if the owner were a freeman and sold it direct from the horse's back he would be charged nothing. Grascherche Market was also one of the three places at which cutlers were allowed to stand when selling away from their shops. The others were the Tun on Cornhill and the market of St. Nicholas Shambles in Newgate Street.

Grascherche Market, like other City markets, was carefully supervised by the authorities, and dealers overcharging or selling inferior goods were rigorously punished. In 1366 we read of a cornmonger of the market who was condemned to the pillory for exposing for sale a sack of oats with a bushel of good grain on

top and the remainder of inferior quality. Again, in 1382, when the retinue of a Bohemian nobleman who was on a visit to England in connection with the marriage of King Richard II to Anne of Bohemia put up at a hostel in the grass market they were charged a halfpenny a bushel above market price for the oats for their horses. When this became known the hosteler, or innkeeper, one John Pountefreit, was summoned to the Guildhall and ordered to repay the overcharge, amounting to 24s., and to pay a fine. On becoming abusive towards the Mayor over the matter he was sent to prison, and only liberated on apologising and binding himself in the sum of £100 to be of good behaviour.

Frequent notices are found in the City books of the appointment of supervisors to attend the market and oversee these points, a duty which fell to selected members of the trade of cornmongers. So far as barley was concerned, the Masters of the Company of Brewers had the right to examine it in the market and to condemn it if broken or mixed. Business was not permitted to start until prime was rung on the great bell of St. Paul's, and the free and strange dealers were kept strictly apart so that they should not buy and sell among themselves. Late in the 15th century the sale of malt was permitted only between the hours of 9 a.m. and noon, and any unsold had to be cleared away by one o'clock. All these times were announced to the merchants by the ringing of the market bell.

An elementary right possessed by every freeman of the City and constantly upheld by the ruling authorities was the right to purchase all goods coming to London at their lowest possible price. This primary right could not be overridden by the interests of any middleman

or shopkeeper, and it was for this reason that the market proper did not start before prime (roughly 6 a.m.), so that any citizen who cared to rise from his bed sufficiently early could have first pull on imported goods to the extent of supplying his household. In addition to this, at Grascherche Market all corn had to be placed on sale to the consumers—brewers, bakers and private citizens—for three clear market days, which were Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, thus giving them a clear week before dealers could purchase it for resale. For the same reason and to protect the market none of the products there dealt in could be brought to the City and sold privately. In 1364 a quantity of malt was confiscated from a dealer who had sold it privately instead of in the market, and only as an act of grace on the part of the Sheriffs was half of it afterwards restored to him. Again, in 1390 a quantity of corn and malt found secreted in a house near the market was forfeited to the Sheriffs. To check speculation in corn it was a strict rule that the buyer should actually accept delivery, not leaving it on hand to be sold again if the price rose.

Under such rules it might be supposed that the only vendors of corn in the market would be strangers—farmers who brought their produce in from the country. Citizens, however, were able to become corn-dealers, even in a large way, because they could go into the country and buy corn on the farms, or as it lay stored in the barns, and bring it to London for sale in the market. A distinction was drawn between this custom and the practice of meeting corn on its journey to London and buying it before it could reach the market. This would, of course, tend to raise its price, and was known as "forestalling," a serious offence, the punish-

ment for which was the pillory. Another rule as strictly enforced forbade farmers to bring samples of their corn to London in order to dispose of the bulk by displaying such sample, as this would be equivalent to a private deal. In 1375 we hear of a London baker, on being shown a sample, buying corn which then lay in Kent, but on arrival at the City it was promptly confiscated by the Sheriffs.

At a time when there was no regular importation of corn from abroad and its plenteousness or scarcity depended on the home harvest, which in its turn depended largely on the weather, it can be readily understood that serious fluctuations in its price were the rule rather than the exception. The year 1557 may be given as an example, when by reason of a short supply the previous year the prices ruling before harvest were 53s. 4d. for a quarter (eight bushels) of wheat, 44s. for a quarter of malt, and 40s. for a quarter of rye. But after harvest, which that year was a bumper one, the price fell to 5s. for wheat, 6s. 8d. for malt, and 3s. 4d. for rye, so that the penny wheaten loaf, which in London had weighed but 11 ounces troy, now rose to 56 ounces. At other times, after a bad harvest, the position became so bad that the poor would be compelled to live on horse-bread, and the authorities were moved to make special efforts to feed the population. Sometimes agents would be sent to the Continent, usually to Prussia, to buy up wheat, and on one occasion the Mayor borrowed £400 from the money belonging to City orphans for this purpose. By the 15th century, after many unfortunate experiences of the kind, granaries were established where corn was stored in times of plenty to be available in times of scarcity. Leadenhall was the first of these, and the

expense of providing the corn was a duty imposed upon the livery companies.

The Mayor, on any occasion when he thought fit, had the power to step in and fix the price of corn. This applied to any commodity going under the name of victuals, a word which did not mean quite the same then as now, for eatables and drinkables in the nature of luxuries were excluded from its application. Thus in 1466 figs and raisins, which had been imported for generations, were publicly declared to be victuals for the express purpose of enabling the Mayor to fix their price.

In medieval London small dealers, such as those working in Grascherche Market, had more difficulties to contend with than the strict rules which governed their trading, difficulties attending the actual medium of exchange by which their business was carried on, and to which modern merchants are strangers. Such difficulties were to some extent modified in the case of the big importers and wholesalers, who would often transact business by means of "blank money," as solid silver bullion was called, which was transferred from one to the other by weight. For them also there was an elementary form of paper currency to the extent that acknowledgments of debt, duly registered at Guildhall, were sometimes passed from one merchant to another, and for those travelling abroad there were letters of credit issued by the great companies of merchants, mostly Italian, and payable at many towns on the Continent where they had branches. But for the small transactions of the shopkeepers there was not only a chronic shortage of coined money, but what there was had to be accepted with caution on account of its pro-

gressive debasement by successive monarchs, and its frequently battered and defaced condition.

An early trouble connected with the monetary system concerned "crocards and pollards," the popular names for battered and clipped coins. It must be borne in mind that in the middle ages there were no copper coins; the penny was a thin disc of silver, often with a cross engraved on its surface so that it could be broken into four for use as farthings. Such coins quickly became worn almost out of recognition, and their value was worsened by clipping, which was a prevalent crime of the period. The Jews before their expulsion were in popular opinion the worst offenders in this respect, and in 1278–9 we read of 293 of them being hanged in London alone for this offence.

Many inferior and worthless coins came from abroad and circulated throughout the country. They were familiarly known as "Lussheboroughs" from Luxembourg, their supposed place of origin. Their circulation had the effect of draining the country of sterling, for a regular traffic was carried on by people who took sterling and even silver dishes abroad, where they sold them for quantities of base coin which they brought back to England to purchase sterling with them again. The export of sterling and silver plate was frequently forbidden, and in 1299 it was ordered that all foreign money brought into the country was to be changed immediately at the King's Exchange at the Tower.

At the same time crocards and pollards were ordered to be accepted by everyone at half their face value, and any shopkeeper refusing them was to be arrested. This produced an immediate shortage of victuals in London, as dealers were inclined to keep their commodities out

of sight, producing them to those who offered sterling, and refusing them to those who came with crocards and pollards. Such a state of things drew a writ from the King to the Mayor ordering him to set the law in motion against refractory shopkeepers, and so the rolls of the Mayor's Court for the following year contain long lists of merchants prosecuted for this cause, lists which appear to comprise practically the entire membership of the trades of cornmongers, fishmongers, butchers, tanners, hide merchants, shoemakers and coppersmiths. Further actions arose in the courts by reason of a clause in the proclamation that contracts already made should be paid in the currency and with the same number of coins mentioned in them, so that where such contracts provided that payment should be made in sterling the creditor would get full value, and in those in which no such provision was made he would receive only half value.

In Tudor times the silver coinage was debased by larger and larger admixtures of copper, until by 1551 the shilling contained no more than 2¾d. worth of fine silver. These coins were contemptuously called "testons," and caused such trouble to tradesmen that on July 9th of that year they were publicly proclaimed in the London markets to be worth no more than ninepence, and all dealers were ordered to accept them on that basis. A month later they were cried at sixpence, and tradesmen forbidden to raise their prices in consequence.

A modern merchant, if suddenly confronted with a financial situation of this kind, might be interested to discover what methods of bookkeeping were adopted by the citizens of London in such an emergency in 1515. Doubtless it would now be impossible to find

any account books kept by a merchant of the period, but in the churchwardens' accounts of St. Michael, Cornhill, which were kept by parishioners who were business men, we get an interesting example of how they dealt with the problem. This year for the first time in their accounts the items are dated as to the month and day, at any rate after July 9th. The receipts and expenses were entered at what appear to be the old rates, and at the end of the year a calculation of the loss was made. The excess of payments over receipts for a month after July 9th was ascertained, and threepence in the shilling, or one-fourth of that sum, reckoned as the loss. For the remainder of the year sixpence in the shilling, or a half of the excess of payments over receipts, was calculated as the loss, and added to the previous loss to estimate the total loss for the year. The method must be considered quite ingenious except for the fact that during the first month the loss would appear to be at the rate of fourpence in the shilling rather than at threepence.

It was arranged that this loss was to be shared between the funds of the Church and the individual churchwarden who acted as treasurer, and in the following year we actually find the Church paying him his share of such loss. Now it seems to stand to reason that no churchwarden handling the funds of the parish, not for his own benefit but as a matter of duty, and because it had come to his turn to serve, could by any process have been persuaded to shoulder half the loss had such actually occurred, and it can only be surmised that he had received and paid the extra proportion, in the first case when he could, and in the second when he must, so that the real loss could not be ascertained with certainty.

This view is borne out by other records of the difficulty of enforcing the law during the following ten years, after which Queen Elizabeth reformed the currency. We read of panics in the London markets, and how the Mayor and Sheriffs had to make the rounds of them to appease the people. In 1556 proclamation was made that any dealer in corn, victuals or other merchandise refusing to accept the teston for sixpence should be imprisoned, with both his body and goods, at the Queen's pleasure. In 1560 the teston was further reduced to fourpence, and men were appointed from each craft to walk the markets with white rods in their hands to see that their members obeyed the proclamation.

Considering such facts as these, and the violent fluctuations in the price of corn previously alluded to, one can only admire the courage of those writers on medieval history who have ventured to estimate the comparative value of money then and now. Such estimates vary between Cobbett's thirty times and Herbert's five times.[1] When we find that in the 15th century a fat capon cost sixpence which could not now be bought for less than 12s. 6d., we shall feel inclined to agree with Cobbett. Bread, taken at its cheapest in the middle ages, has risen about seven times, but compared with its dearest has scarcely risen at all. Shoes have risen about thirty times, and beef, since it was first sold by weight in 1533 at a halfpenny a pound, about thirty-six times, taking the average price of English beef to-day at 1s. 6d. a pound. Pepper, the most important spice of the middle ages, and the search for which has been well said to have laid the foundation of the British Empire, was in 1412 4s. a pound, although the previous year its

[1] *History of the Twelve Livery Companies*, p. 80.

price had been fixed by the King at 1s. 8d. During a century at that period it had fluctuated between 8d. and 8s. a pound. White sugar, which is now worth about fourpence a pound, was in the 15th century a shilling a pound. Again, at a time when a whole lamb could be bought for a shilling, a pound of wax candles cost sixpence; but how many pounds of wax candles would one require to possess to-day before it became possible to purchase a whole lamb with them?

The fact is that the proportional differences in value among commodities render all such estimates misleading, and even if we base our calculation on wages instead we shall be little better off. We may say that the wages of a labourer, which in the 14th and 15th centuries were fivepence a day, are now £2 10s. a week, and so money was twenty times as valuable, although this is not quite correct, because there were many feast days throughout the year on which a labourer was not allowed to work; and apart from the fact that not all incomes consist of wages, the much larger range of comforts which a workman can obtain to-day and the stable prices at which he can buy still vitiate the argument.

From time to time we get interesting notices of the taverns that existed in and around Grascherche Market during the middle ages. The earliest of these records concerns a certain Peter the Taverner, who kept a wine shop there. He was a man of some consequence, as shown by the fact that in 1308 he stood security for one Gocelyn, a serjeant of the City who farmed the murage or toll for rebuilding the walls, collected at the gates and in the markets of the City. Peter was a man of independent views, and for airing them too freely in 1305 on the subject of the Earl of Athol, a Scottish

nobleman who was afterwards executed in London, he was fined at the Guildhall. A further incident in his career the same year gives an insight into the difficulties of a wine merchant of the period. Having bought twelve casks of wine from an importer for £24, it was found on delivery to be so putrid that it could not be recognised as wine, and when seen by the scrutineers of wine the casks were ordered to be smashed and the liquor turned down the gutter. Notwithstanding that the scrutineers were officials appointed by the Corporation to condemn and destroy bad wine, the importer was able to compel Peter to pay the £24 by suing him in the Sheriffs' Court, and he had to wait for two years before he could obtain restitution by an appeal to the Mayor's Court, and then only by proving that he had received a guarantee with the wine. It was customary at this time when few people could write to confirm business bargains in taverns by handing over the "God's penny," or earnest money, in the presence of witnesses, and in 1306 we find the sale of a house so conducted in this tavern.

Another inn in the market was the George, situated next to Allhallows Church, where in 1175 the brother of the Earl of Ferrers was murdered and his body thrown into the street. Its memory is perpetuated in George Yard, Lombard Street. Another notice of an inn in Gracechurch Street, which reminds us that the earliest stage plays were performed in inn yards, is found in 1594 in the shape of a letter from Lord Hunsdon to the Lord Mayor requesting permission for the new company of players to perform at "The Cross Keys in Gracious Street now that the sickness [i.e. the plague] hath departed from the City." This inn was situated

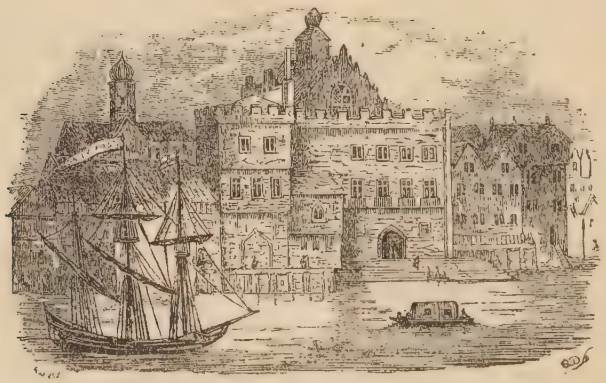
at the corner of Bell Yard, and lasted until it was destroyed in the Great Fire.

Further up the yard a tablet recently erected informs us that here in former times stood the Bell Inn, after which the yard is named. In the 16th century it belonged to Sir Andrew Judd, Mayor in 1550–1, who left an annuity of £10 issuing from it to the school he had established at Tonbridge. The manner in which the inn was conducted at the period may be judged by the fact that on June 12, 1560, the landlady was carted round London for being a courtesan. To make a public show of feminine frailty was one of the pleasant customs of the time, but the indignity of such a punishment is somewhat lessened when we see the inability of the authorities to discriminate between the degree of moral turpitude involved in different classes of misdemeanour. Thus in the following year they made a similar parade of a fishwife who had done nothing worse than sell whitebait, which was contrary to law, and to add to the punishment they crowned her with a garland of the fish threaded on a string.

An incident in 1306 at a tavern in Grascherche Street throws considerable light on the morality of the time and on the shortness of temper which was responsible for most of the tragedies which occurred. A certain Stephen the Barber entered the tavern in company with a woman, ordered wine, and proceeded to the solar or first-floor room to drink it. After a while, as the guests were making considerable noise, the landlady ascended the stairs to enquire the cause, and was just in time to catch the man in the act of resuming his nether garments. She appears to have made no remark at this perhaps not unusual circumstance, but the barber, losing his temper,

hit her over the head with a quart pot and then proceeded to kick her. For this unprovoked assault she afterwards sued him at the Guildhall and obtained 10 marks (£6 13s. 4d.) damages. This was a considerable sum at the time, equal in fact to the annual salary of a priest.

A few years after 1456, when the houses were built in front of Allhallows Church, it is interesting to note that the one on the corner of Lombard Street and Gracechurch Street, where now are the new premises of Barclays Bank, was occupied by William Shore, a goldsmith, and the husband of the famous Jane Shore. After these houses were built the market gradually declined, and the process of extinction was aided by the narrowing of Gracechurch Street itself from its ancient breadth by the continual encroachment of the houses on either side, a practice which is responsible for many of the narrow streets of the City. The last mention of Grascherche as a cornmarket is found in 1556, but by the end of the century it had ceased to exist.



ANCIENT FISHMONGERS' HALL

CHAPTER VIII

THE GREAT SELDS OF LONDON

IN ancient times a foreign exporter, or a manufacturer or producer from the provinces, did not, as now, consign his goods to a particular buyer in London ; it was his practice to travel with his merchandise and to sell it on arrival to any who would buy. In consequence of this system laws were in force covering every circumstance of his dealing and of his living whilst he remained in London. The period of his stay was limited to forty days, and if at the end of that period any part of his goods remained unsold they had to be bound up and remain untouched and unsold until his return.

The alien merchant was only allowed to transact business with citizens and not with non-freemen from the provinces, who came to London, as the chief port of the country, to purchase goods for, or to sell the produce of, their home town. As early as 1292 wine was confiscated from merchants of Oxford because they had bought it in London direct from the foreign importer. Herein lies the secret of the great importance attached to the freedom of London and the reason why throughout the middle ages foreigners so persistently endeavoured to avoid the restrictions placed upon them and the citizens as persistently defended their immemorial privileges. London was the chief port of England and the great emporium for its trade, and the citizens were the middlemen through whose hands both imports and

exports passed, yielding a constant profit to those who handled them.

It is for this reason that one of the most frequent accusations brought against foreigners and one of the offences most frequently legislated against was that of selling to each other, which really meant that an alien merchant bringing his goods from abroad had sold them to a stranger from the provinces, or conversely had bought from the stranger for export, each being equally labelled as a "foreigner" by the citizens. In this there often lay a pitfall for the alien merchant, for it was a difficult point to decide how far a citizen ought to participate in such transactions. To act as a mere intermediary or broker between the alien and the stranger from the provinces was not sufficient; the citizen had to be an actual merchant buying from one and selling to the other, and often the foreigner could not decide the real status of the citizen with whom he was doing business. An example of this can be seen in 1462, when a merchant of Venice bought cloth from a citizen who was afterwards convicted of selling it as his own when in reality he was only acting as agent for another foreigner, the actual owner. The cloth was accordingly declared forfeited, and the Venetian merchant only recovered it by asserting that at the time of the purchase he really believed it to be the propery of the citizen, and by paying a fine of £10.

For the same reason most of the attacks on foreigners, which occurred periodically throughout the middle ages, were engineered by the Mercers or by their apprentices and servants. The Mercers were the great importers of the time, especially of silk, cloth, precious stones, bullion, and such-like valuable commodities, and felt more keenly than others the competition, often unfair, of

foreigners who bore no part in the burdens and obligations of citizenship.

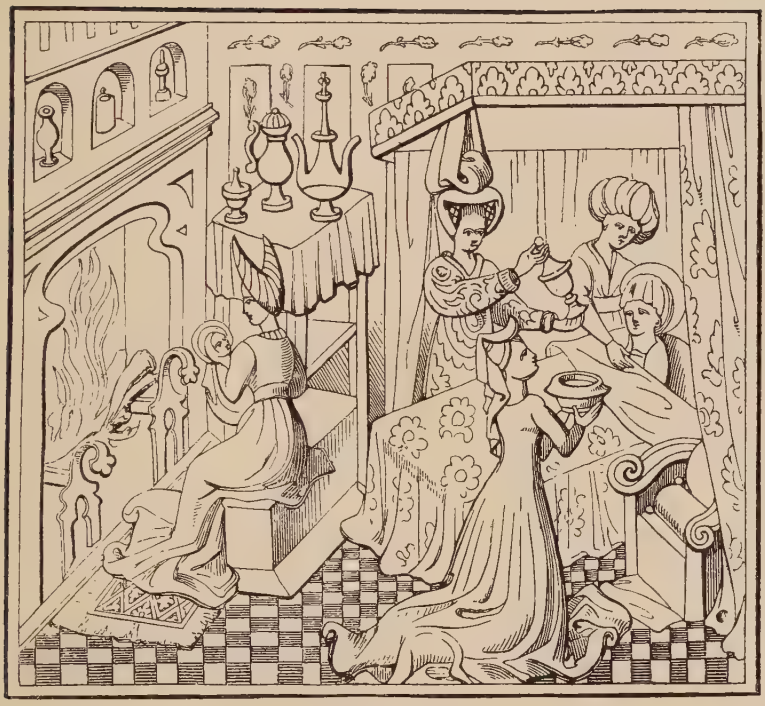
So far as the life of the foreign merchant during his stay in London was concerned, it was governed by laws dating from the most ancient times. In Saxon times a man who entertained a stranger for three days was under obligation to bring such guest to justice if he committed a crime, or to make amends on his behalf. In the same way in the middle ages it was the duty of the innkeeper to inform his guests of any laws, old or new, made for the regulation of the conduct of visitors, and if he failed to do so he was liable for the payment of any penalty imposed on the stranger for a breach of such laws.

There were numerous hostels or inns specially provided for the accommodation of merchants from the provinces or foreign parts. These were not only residential hotels, but also places of business, which, in addition to entertaining the merchant for the forty days during which he was allowed to remain in the City, stored his goods and became his show-room and shop for the same period, and to which the dealers of the City came to buy. For the last-mentioned service the hostelers in the 15th century received from the foreigner a tariff of twopence out of every twenty shillings' worth of goods bought or sold. Every foreigner had to stay with one of these innkeepers ; he could hire a cellar for the storage of his goods, but was not permitted to sleep there.

Hostels were supposed to be kept only by freemen of the City or by their wives, and we often find the wife of a craftsman carrying on such a business independently of her husband, while the latter remained at his trade. The authorities were often very severe with non-freemen found keeping hostels in contravention of the law, and

the reason becomes apparent on finding that such men were in a position of trust, inasmuch as they represented the commonalty in the matter of overseeing and enforcing the trade regulations. It was the duty of the hosteler or innkeeper to see that no goods belonging to the newly arrived merchant were opened for display until the Sheriff or his assistant had been sent for to assess the Custom on such goods, and at the same time to exact the "scavage," amounting to about threepence for every hundredweight, levied for such inspection. He had to see that none of his guests traded among themselves, but only with free merchants of the City, that no unauthorised person came there and acted as broker between buyer and seller, and that the goods when sold were properly weighed by the custodian of the King's Beam or weighing machine. He was not himself allowed to act as a broker either between foreigners or between foreigner and citizen, and conversely no licensed broker was allowed to keep a hostel.

In 1298 there is record of the prosecution of eight hostelers, two of whom were women, for being foreign lodging-house keepers and permitting their foreign guests to trade among themselves, sending the goods out of the City by night, and so defrauding the Customs. Tolls were levied on all goods belonging to foreigners, whether coming into the City or going out. These hostelers had also continued selling the goods of their guests after their departure, declaring them to be their own. Some of the accused denied being foreigners, and claimed that they were citizens, a claim difficult to disprove at a time when it does not appear to have been customary, as it was in the 15th century, to give every new freeman a certificate of admission. Those who



A BEDROOM SCENE

admitted being foreigners fell back on the usual plea of failing to understand the laws of the City.

The hostelers bought bread, ale and horsebread to serve to customers and their horses, but were not allowed to make any of these articles themselves. Horsebread was an artificial horse food made by the brown or tourte bakers of peas and beans, and was much used in the middle ages. In the 14th century the hostelers charged twopence a day for hay for a horse and sixpence for a bushel of oats, except in times of scarcity. For a night's lodging for a man the usual charge was a penny.

For some centuries the keeper of a hostelry or inn was known as a hosteler, and it is only since 1473 that this old-fashioned word has degenerated until it has come to signify no more than the assistant who attends to the horse. In that year the Hostelers of London, with the consent of the Mayor and Aldermen, solemnly changed their name to that of Innholders, paying to the City 10 marks for the privilege. After this time they are never called by any other name than that of Innholders, and their apprentices enrolled at Guildhall under the same name. So it is that we have Innholders' Hall in Little College Street, with its quaint, curiously carved front, designed, or partly designed, by Sir Christopher Wren. Their change of name in 1473 so increased their importance that ten years later they felt strong enough to make a move in the direction of establishing a sort of monopoly. To accomplish this they obtained from the Mayor and Aldermen an ordinance to the effect that strangers visiting the City with their horses should put up at inns having signboards hanging out, and not in private houses or small lodging-houses, which they described as "pety hostryes." They also obtained the right of search of

horsebread, not only among members of their own trade, but also among the brown bakers, although in this case they prudently asked for an officer of the Mayor to accompany them.

To deal with several classes of imported goods, notably wool, cloth and leather, certain large houses were appointed and given monopoly of their storage and sale, and these went by the name of Selds. Stow contends that the word "seld" meant originally no more than a small shop or shed, and although this interpretation has been disputed by later authorities, it is confirmed in several ways by the City records. For example, in 1283 the Oynters, workers in grease of some kind, and most probably the forerunners of the Tallow Chandlers, were ordered to remove themselves from their shops or selds in Chepe, of which they held seventeen. The reason for this was probably the nuisance arising from their melting operations at a time when Mercers and other superior traders were settling in the same street, but the interest of the entry for our present purpose lies in the use of shop and seld as interchangeable terms. Nevertheless, in early times a distinction was usually drawn between a shop and a seld, implying that the latter was in the nature of a warehouse. So we find in 1248, when a fair was held at Westminster by order of the King, that all the shops and selds of the merchants in London were closed, and again in 1265 on the occasion of the birth of a son to Prince Edward, afterwards Edward I, that both were closed for the day as a sign of rejoicing.

From this it is apparent that caution must be used in assuming that all the selds of which we shall find mention were great emporiums or market-places. Indeed, that this was not the case is proved by what we know of a

house in Cheapside known for centuries as the Brokenselde, a house the location of which certain indications in the records enable us to fix with a fair degree of accuracy. In Letter-Book I, under date 1412, it is said to be opposite the Standard. As the Standard stood slightly west of the corner of Honey Lane Market, this would give a house within two or three doors of Bow Churchyard, and can be checked by another entry in the Calender of Wills under date 1332, which tells us that the Brokenselde was in the parish of St. Mary Magdalen, Milk Street. Now, included in that parish are five houses on the south side of Cheapside, starting from the house next the one on the corner of Bread Street and counting eastwards. So we find that No. 51, Cheapside, now a tailor's shop, is the most easterly of these, and consequently the nearest to the end of Honey Lane Market, and almost exactly opposite to where the Standard stood. This house is then almost certainly the old Brokenselde, a house which reveals its origin in its name as a shed which at one time became notorious by reason of its ruinous condition. Similarly in other parts of the City we have Brokenwharf and Brokencross. Its dimensions may be gauged by the fact that for hundreds of years, although retaining its ancient name, it was a tavern. It was such in 1325, when there is record of several customers quarrelling until one was stabbed to death. In 1331 its owner, Francus atte Brokenselde, was one of the taverners who refused to obey the order of the Mayor to keep their cellar doors open, and again in 1332 it is described as a tavern, when it was bequeathed by one Richard Costantyn to the rector of the church of St. Bartholomew the Less in what is now Bartholomew Lane, beside the Bank of England. In 1412 it was a

Sheriff's compter or prison, but probably only remained as such for a brief period.

There were several more houses retaining in the 14th century the ancient name of seld, and which could yet have been never more than small shops. Curiously enough, most of these were in Cheapside, so confirming Stow's contention that that thoroughfare was in early times not a proper street of houses, but merely a succession of small sheds with no more upperstructure than one small room or solar. Among these was Arnseld or Bernseld in the parish of St. Peter Chepe, which finds only one mention in the records—in 1349, and Girdlersselde, described in 1332 as being situated in Westchepe in the parish of St. Pancras. This may be the same as a girdler's shop which in 1312 was situated next door to the entrance of the Great Seld, and would consequently be on the south side of Cheapside, near the corner of Bucklersbury.

Another of these small selds was in the parish of St. Mary le Bow, and in the early 14th century was known as Godchepselde from its owner, Hamo Godchepe, a mercer and Alderman of Bread Street Ward, and Sheriff in 1315. It has been identified with the later "Unicorn" in Chepe, where Machyn in his Diary records under date 1561 : "The same day at after-none dyd master Godderyke's sune, the gold-smyth, go hup in-to hys father's gylddyng house, toke a bowe strynge and hangyd ym-seylff, at the syne of the Unycorne in Chepe-syd."

In addition to these was, also in Cheapside, a house known indifferently as the Crownselde, the New Seldam, Tamarsilde, and the "King's Head." Stow tells us that it was a stone building erected by Edward III as a place

from which to view the tournaments which were occasionally held in Cheapside. It stood immediately in front of Bow Church, causing all the windows and doors on that side of the church to be stopped up. It was used for this purpose until 1410, when Henry IV granted it to several mercers, at which time it was worth £7 13s. 4d. a year. However, some years before this, in 1384, we find the "Crowned Seld" in the possession of John de Heylesdon, a mercer.

If this house, as seems likely, is the "seld called the Croune in Chepe" mentioned in 1457, mercers were then not only using it as a shop, but living there with their apprentices. In June of that year it was the scene of one of those numerous risings against the Lombards which took place at intervals throughout the middle ages. Such risings were popularly known as "hurlings," and often led to much shedding of blood and subsequent hanging of the rioters. This riot followed one in the previous year, in which several foreigners were killed, and at least two, and some say three, apprentices hanged. Not deterred by this experience, the servants of the mercers concocted a new conspiracy in 1457 and persuaded the servants of other craftsmen to join them. Their first meeting-place was in Tower Royal, near Cannon Street, where one of their number taught sword-play to the others. Afterwards for safety's sake they adjourned to Hoxton, where, before starting operations, they mutually swore fidelity on the Cross. No proper cross being available for this purpose, they used a silver groat, a coin on the obverse of which was a cross. On the day fixed for the "hurling" the ringleader issued from his master's house, the seld called the Croune in Chepe, with an armful of staves, which, casting on the

ground, he cried, "Go we hence, for there is an Englishman slain by the Lombards in Lombard Street." This was to be the signal to start, but the effort was nipped in the bud by the timely arrival of the Mayor and Sheriffs, when several arrests were made, but not apparently without a struggle. One of the confederacy when questioned in court boldly admitted that he had joined the conspiracy and taken the oath with the express determination to kill a particular Lombard "for holding his wife in adultery unto his perpetual shame."

So far as the last count against the Lombards is concerned, it is perhaps scarcely necessary to remind the judicious reader that competition for the favours of the fair sex has throughout the ages aggravated the incidence of political discussion. It was always an important factor in the hatred of the citizens for the Lombards, who as early as 1301 were accused of dragging London girls into their hostel in Cornhill and shamefully maltreating them. If their swains protested, they would not only beat them, but hurl at them an epithet curiously reminiscent of the late war, "Englishoundes." Even in Saxon times John Wallingford tells us that an important cause of disagreement between English and Danes was the success of the foreigners in the pursuit of the Saxon damsels by reason of their curious habit of combing their hair daily and bathing every Saturday.

The Crownselde, under the name of the Crown, appears to have been still occupied by a mercer in the 16th century, one John Hare, who died in 1564.

Other selds, all situated in Cheapside, which, although they find but the briefest mention in the records, must by their description have been larger and much more important places in their time than any of the foregoing,

were St. Martin's Seld near Soper Lane, mentioned in 1285 and named after the church of St. Martin Pomery in Ironmonger Lane, and Whitawyeresselde in the parish of St. Mary Colechurch, mentioned in 1328 as containing shops within it. Its name indicates its purpose, for the White Tawyers were tanners of white leather using alum in their work, as distinct from Grey Tawyers, tanners of grey leather.

Another of these was Brantefeldseld, described in 1332 as a seld in Westchepe with four shops towards the street. In 1283 it was known as Arraces Seld, when it was owned by Robert de Arras. Arras's widow sold or bequeathed chests, cupboards and counters in it to John de Douegate, who in 1302 left them to his daughter. It was in the parish of St. Mary le Bow, and is mentioned again in 1345, when an aumbry, or cupboard, and nine chests in it are referred to.

A famous seld of the middle ages was the Tanners' Seld in Cheapside, near Bow Church, where the free tanners of London brought their leather and sold it in open market. There were, in fact, two selds of the name, the other being in Friday Street, and set apart for the use of the foreign tanners. The manner in which the Tanners' Seld in Cheapside was conducted may be inferred from many entries in the records. It was laid out in cupboards and benches, and although the seld was under the general supervision of the fraternity of Tanners, each member possessed freehold rights in his bench and cupboard to the extent that he could sell or bequeath them to anyone he pleased, providing the devisee were a free tanner. Thus we find in 1336 a tanner leaving his table there to his wife if she marry a freeman of the craft, or as long as she remain a widow, or, alternatively,

it is to go to his apprentice. Another in 1339 made a similar bequest to his son and his son's heirs who may be free of the craft of Tanners. Instances of the kind could be multiplied, and in two other cases the position in the seld of the fraternity itself becomes apparent. In 1348 a tanner left his table to his son if he should resolve to follow that trade; otherwise it was to go to his apprentice for life, and afterwards to the Society of Tanners, they paying eight shillings a year to his son. Again, in 1369, if the devisee of a bench in the seld neglected to cause masses to be sung in Bow Church, his rights should revert to the fraternity. These tanners carried on their business on the outskirts of the City, and most of them on the banks of the Fleet River. Curiously enough, in the wills enrolled in the Court of Husting no mention occurs of tanners of the Moor in connection with the Tanners' Seld, although at the period Moorfields was a principal centre of the industry.

In 1336 the Tanners' Seld in Westchepe was in the possession of Robert de Kelseye, an Alderman, who doubtless received a rent from the Society of Tanners, who themselves became the proprietors in 1405.

The other Tanners' Seld in Friday Street was, so we are told in a petition of 1370, appointed from olden times to be the only place where foreign tanners could bring their leather for purposes of storage and sale. The petition was addressed to the Mayor and Aldermen by Adam Lovekyn, the custodian, who complained that the foreign tanners were neglecting his seld and taking their goods elsewhere. This had deprived him of his means of support, for they used to pay him one penny for every dicker, or ten skins, which passed through the seld. The result of his petition was an ordinance that

any foreign tanner taking his goods elsewhere than to the Tanners' Seld for sale should be liable to a fine. Nevertheless, this neglect continued, and the reason becomes apparent from an ordinance of 1412 again ordering foreign tanners to take their wares to the selds of old appointed, there to be sold on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, in which it is stated that all such tanned hides were to be subject to the inspection of four cordwainers, a girdler, a male-maker (or bag-maker), a leather-bottle-maker, and a currier, all freemen of the City. Such men, of course, represented the buyers of leather, and their verdict on its quality would not be likely to err on the side of complacency.

The history of another seld, known as the Winchester Seld in the brief period during which its existence is recognised in the City records, throws considerable light on the manner in which a seld for foreign merchants ought to be conducted, and upon the, at the time, almost inevitable corruption which crept in among officials whose position gave them opportunities for fraud and extortion.

This seld was situated in Upper Thames Street, in the parish of Allhallows the Great, and therefore somewhat to the east of Cannon Street Station, and was used for storing and selling wool brought to London by the merchants of Andover and surrounding districts. One modern authority [1] has indeed asserted that there were two Winchester Selds, the other being in the neighbourhood of the present Mansion House; but the only foundation for this assumption appears to be that one of the corrupt officials bore, as we shall see, the name of William of Woolchurch Haw. Such a name in the 13th century

[1] Riley, *Liber Custumarum*, Rolls Series, Introduction, xlvii.

indicated no more than a long connection with the London wool market as it was conducted in the churchyard of St. Mary Woolchurch Haw, and probably accounts for its owner being given the position of custodian of the Winchester Seld.

An office of this kind was one of authority and responsibility, for its holder represented the City authorities in his relation to the merchant strangers who resorted to his seld. This William of Woolchurch Haw, however, who was custodian in 1293, instead of seeing that the citizens bought their wool in a free market, was in the habit of shutting the doors of the seld as soon as a consignment was brought in by the Andover merchants and bargaining with them for its purchase. He would then put it up for sale as though it still belonged to its original owners, thus extracting from the citizens two profits, the merchants' and his own. In addition to this he had set up a tron or weighing machine of his own, so pocketing the fees that should have gone to the King. When accused of these offences at Guildhall he first attempted bluster, but afterwards threw himself on the mercy of the Court, and was fined £20, later reduced to £5. Again, in 1298 Alan de Newebery, the then keeper of Winchester Seld, was convicted of similar malpractices.

What appears to be the earliest reference to the Winchester Seld occurs in a will of 1278, where it is called the new seld in the parish of Allhallows at the Hay, another name for Allhallows the Great. The last reference to it is in 1347, when it was in the possession of Alice, widow of William atte Bruge, who leased it for twenty years to a vintner at a rent of 60s. a year.

Not far away in the next parish of St. John upon Walbrook was a seld called Andover Seld, which, by

its name, may be suspected of a similar use to that of Winchester Seld. It is mentioned only twice, once in 1278, when its owner, Edward le Blount, left it to his eldest son John, and again in 1313, when this John, now known as John le Blund, Knight, left it to his son Edward.

But the seld *par excellence* was that which stood in Cheapside near the north-west corner of Queen Street, then called Soper Lane. Its importance is attested by its frequent description as "the Great Seld of London," and its proportions by its more usual name of "The Broad Seld." Its condition and appearance and the wealth and position of its owners at a time when houses were none too well maintained may be inferred by another of its names—the Painted Seld. Yet another name for it was the Seld of Rohesia, or Roysia de Coventre, after the name of a famous and energetic lady who was its owner at the end of the 13th century and the beginning of the 14th. So well known was she in City life, that long after her death its usual names were sometimes ignored in favour of "The Seld at one time owned by Rohesia de Coventre."

It was the home of the Mercers, the most opulent and powerful of the trades of ancient London, and even now the first of the twelve great Livery Companies, whose business it was to bring the treasures of the known world to the doors of the citizens. Even after it had ceased to be a seld or market-place in the strict sense of the word, the mercers still had their shops at the spot until comparatively recent times.

It is only from one or two stray entries in the records that we are able to determine the precise spot in Cheapside occupied by the Broadseld. Most of these references

merely give it as in Westchepe, in the parish of St. Pancras, except the entry of a lease in Letter-Book G, which seems to place it at the corner of Soper Lane, still leaving us in doubt as to which corner is intended. This information is, however, supplemented from a somewhat different source, a 17th-century transcript of a schedule of the property belonging to London Bridge, extracted from the 15th-century wills preserved in the Bishop of London's Registry at St. Paul's.[1] From this we learn that at the north-west corner of Soper Lane was a vacant plot of ground, and next to it in Cheapside the Broadseld, thus indicating a spot between Queen Street and Bow Church, but nearer to the former.

It is impossible now to determine the size of the seld with any certainty, but its epithet of "Broad," together with the few details of its internal arrangements afforded by the records, suggests that it must have possessed a considerable frontage to Cheapside. Whereas with other selds the interior fixtures are spoken of as tables or benches, in the Broadseld they are always indicated by the more imposing expression "shops," and each shop was equipped with its aumbries or cupboards for storage of the goods in which the mercers dealt. The shops did not open directly on to the street, but were contained within the seld, which constituted a great emporium somewhat resembling our modern produce exchanges, and had two entrances, one opening from the vacant ground on the corner of Soper Lane and the other at the farther end of the seld in Cheapside.

The first we hear of the Great Seld is in the will of Henry de Coventre, mercer and Alderman of Vintry Ward, dated 1281, and proved in 1283. He left it to

[1] Quoted in *Chronicles of London Bridge*, 1827, p. 264.

his son Stephen, subject to the life interest of his wife Rohesia, who from this time until her death held possession of it.

In 1300 she had some trouble with her seld, for we find her prosecuting a prominent citizen, Richer de Refham, in the Court of Husting, for occupying it against her will. On this occasion, we are informed, her son Stephen, the next heir, came to court and displayed more feeling than was perhaps decorous. In fact, he called the defendant "false and perjured and convicted of fraud." Perhaps his was an excitable nature, for two years previously we hear of him walking into another shop in Chepe and violently assaulting a man who was sitting quietly on a seat within, who might have been severely beaten had he not been rescued by two others.

In 1301 record is found of a space in the seld large enough to hold two aumbries, which had been let jointly to two mercers, who then had to surrender their holding because Rohesia had leased the entire seld for a period of years. She was again in possession of it by 1311, in which year tenants are found surrendering their leases to her. In the same year Hamo Godchepe, the owner of Godchepseld, became the lessee of a piece of land in the seld at a rental of 20s. a year.

Stephen de Coventre, Rohesia's son, dying in 1310, bequeathed it under the name of the Painted Seld to his wife, but his mother, surviving him until 1318, left instructions in her will that it was to be sold to pay her debts. Her executors did so, but sold it in portions to the mercers, and so after this time we find them bequeathing their places to their descendants as freeholds, the same as was done by the tanners at the Tanners' Seld. So in 1325 one Henry Burel left his "shops, with chests

and all appurtenances," among his various relatives. Others, while occupying part of their holding, would let out the remainder to some other member of the trade. The last we hear of the premises being used as a seld in the old sense is in 1354, when a shop in it was owned by William de Causton, a prominent mercer.

In the middle of the 16th century, although there is no doubt that the place was carried on under very different conditions, it still went by the name of the Broadseld. Two such references are to be found in Machyn's Diary, in 1551 and 1559, where the name is spelt " brod-selle." In the first he relates how the Duke of Somerset was accused of plotting to capture the Tower and the brod-selle. If the Duke ever had such an intention, it was doubtless on account of the riches to be found there in the hands of the mercers. The second entry is more puzzling, as the diarist refers to " my lord keeper of the brod sille," an official who has not been heard of before, but may have been a person who was in charge of the before-mentioned riches.

In 1590 the whole property was left to the Company of Mercers by one of its members, Thomas Egerton, who in his will describes it as a tenement at one time known as " the greate seild," from which it may be inferred that by then it had ceased to be a seld at all. Indeed, long before that time it was divided into shops as at the present time, where mercers not only had their places of business, but lived over them.

When all the ancient selds of London, appointed for the public sale of goods other than victuals brought in from the provinces or abroad, had fallen out of use and disappeared, wool was sent to Woolquay, where now the Custom House stands, cloth to Bakwell Hall, or Blackwell

Hall, in Basinghall Street, and a temporary home was provided for leather, nails and other hardware in a house adjoining Guildhall on the north. This took place in the early part of the 15th century, and the last-mentioned house acquired the name of Common Seld. This place was the property of the City, and the forfeitures and fines resulting from the assay, or inspection, of leather there, together with a charge for "seldage" levied on the merchants, were the property of the Corporation. Its nearness to the Guildhall did not prevent dealers from avoiding it when they could. Complaint of this was made in a petition to the Mayor and Aldermen in 1451, when it was said that leather was brought in and stored and sold in secret places. In 1443 it was resolved to remove the seld elsewhere, which not being carried out, a fresh resolution to the same effect was made in 1453, and that the income arising from it should be farmed out for £10 a year.

It is only now that we get the first intimation of any place specially appointed for the sale of "foreign" nails, although at a time when houses were built of wood more than of any other material they were an important article of commerce. In the account of the rebuilding of a house at St. Mary at Hill in 1491 it is recorded that 4,950 nails were used. The early method by which nails were sold is of some interest, because it has given rise to a popular expression—tenpenny nails—an expression which has in comparatively recent times sunk (or risen) from the position of an actual description of goods to the rank of a proverb, and almost an expletive. Nails were originally sold by the hundred, and in the 15th century we find twopenny nails, threepenny nails, and so on up to tenpenny nails, in each case the name

referring to the price per hundred. This mode of indicating size and price dropped out because in the later part of the century competition caused them to be sold at a price lower than their names would suggest. Thus in 1490 we find sixpenny nails sold for fivepence, fivepenny nails for fourpence, and so on. Such competition was due to the importation of Spanish nails, which are found in use at this time, but as late as 1534 we find fivepenny nails sold at their named value when they are stipulated to be English.

In spite of all the changes in these market-places which were taking place at the time, the ancient word "seld" and its meaning and purpose were not yet forgotten. We often hear the new seld for cloth—Bakwell Hall—referred to as the Seld of Bakwell Hall, and in later times, when many of these articles were transferred to Leadenhall, that market is called, in the same way, the Seld of Leadenhall.

Bakwell Hall was on the west side of Basinghall Street, at what is now number six. In the 13th century it belonged to the Corporation, who sold or pledged it to thirty-five citizens in order to raise funds to complete the payment of a loan to the King. In 1286 it became the property of Sir John de Banquelle, from whom its name is derived, and in 1396 it returned to the ownership of the City. Three years later they started to use it for the sale of foreign cloth, which had previously been sold at the Stocks Market, and in the neighbourhood of the church of St. Antholin in Budge Row. It was provided with cupboards and cases for the storage of the cloth, the foreign owners of which were allowed to sell it from 11 a.m. on Thursdays until 11 a.m. on Saturdays in each week. They paid a rental for this accommodation,

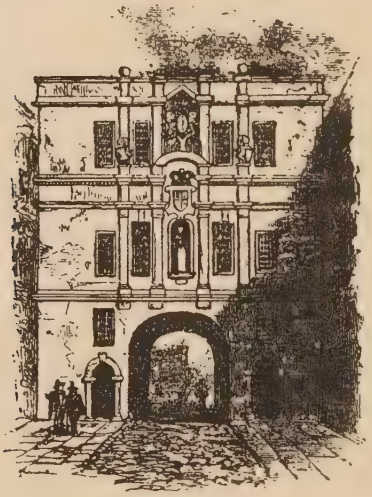
and the keeper, who was appointed by the Company of Drapers, had at first to keep account of the fees so derived and render it to the Chamberlain whenever required. Afterwards he paid 40 marks a year for his office. It was still the market for foreign cloth in 1638, at which time it was ordered that the quantity coming to the City having so increased that Bakwell Hall was no longer able to accommodate it all, the surplus should be taken to Leadenhall. In 1662 we find both places used for the cloth market.

In 1463 another crop of complaints reached the Common Council of foreign cloth being sold in inns and secret places instead of at the selds appointed, and this time a place that had become notorious for such transactions was Blossoms Inn, an ancient hostelry in Lawrence Lane, Cheapside, now represented by Blossoms Inn Yard, used as a railway receiving office. The Common Seld to the north of Guildhall was then closed, and the market for wool, lead and nails removed to Leadenhall. Leather followed in 1488, and about the same time cutlery.

In 1622 it was again enacted by the Common Council that all foreigners bringing nails, knives or other wares made of iron and steel should bring them to Leadenhall, there to be shown, searched, housed and sold, on pain of forfeiture of one-fourth of their value. In the following year the Ironmongers' and Cutlers' Companies complained that such goods were being brought secretly to the City and sold in inns, chambers and other by-places, and notably in houses in the Minories, which, as the site of a former conventual establishment, was then a place of privilege. To remedy this state of affairs the Court of Aldermen appealed to the King's

Council for redress. In their petition they stated that a competent number of shops and warehouses had been built of freestone at Leadenhall for the use of these strangers, and two days a week appointed as market days. The multiplication of such complaints affords us a clue not only to the reason why the old selds of London died out, but why it was that the greater concentration of foreign trade at Bakwell Hall and Leadenhall was also destined in the long run to prove a failure.

Leadenhall itself, which alone remains to remind us of the market-places with which the City was in ancient times so amply provided, was thus destined to become the last of the Great Selds of London—the last to be built and the last to remain.



OLD LUDGATE

CHAPTER IX

HOUNDSDITCH

A WELCOME example of the spread of the historical sense was afforded a few years back when a proposal was mooted to change the name of Houndsditch on account of its somewhat unsavoury suggestion, but was vetoed by the inhabitants on the ground that their street under its ancient name was famous the world over. They had a right to speak and to be listened to with respect, for they and their forbears had been mainly instrumental in spreading this fame, and by their widely spread commercial activities must have caused people in many distant lands to become interested in the origin and history of so curiously named a thoroughfare. This decision may be compared with another made by the inhabitants of Bishopsgate Street at the beginning of the century. Here they were confronted with the proposition to drop the ancient distinction between "Within" and "Without," and to throw it all into one under the name of Bishopsgate. Really, the people who get up these "stunts" ought to inform those who have to decide of all the implications involved. How many of the business men of the street knew that the syllable "gate" used in such a way does not mean what it appears to mean? How many were told that instead of the old meaning of "the street that runs through the Bishop's gate," the new name would rather suggest "the street of the bishops," with the implication that at some time or other crowds of these

ecclesiastics had lived there? No: the inhabitants were left to decide the question simply by the economy of printing on their bill-heads, and who can wonder that their decision was a bad one?

Most of the place-names of the City, whether belonging to streets or districts, are the repositories of portions of ancient London history, and there is no more delightful task for the lover of the old City than their elucidation. Of none is this more true than of Houndsditch, the origin of which has given rise to many conjectures. Stow suggested that it was so called by reason of dead dogs, among other rubbish, being thrown there; others have thought that it was made as a defence against the Huns, or barbarians from the surrounding districts; but this theory presupposes that it was known by its present name in Roman times, which it was not; others, again, have created or resurrected an eponymous Mr. Hound, who owned it or lived near it. But perhaps the best clue to its origin may be found in a petition addressed to the Mayor by several citizens shortly before the year 1500. The petitioners complain that the City hounds, which were kept in kennels on the sides of the ditch, had become a nuisance by reason of the odours given off when their food, consisting largely of meat and rotten bones, was boiled by their keepers, and that this was particularly noticeable when the wind was in any point of the north.[1]

This is the first hint furnished by the records as to where the Corporation kept their hunting-dogs, and if any theory is to be built upon it, the hounds must have been on the banks of the ditch from the early 13th century. This, of course, cannot be proved, although

[1] *Arnold's Chronicle*, ed. 1811, pp. 86–7.

no place seems more likely for such a purpose than the waste ground just outside the walls. That they must have possessed such packs from early times seems certain from what we know of the hunting proclivities of the City rulers from a period just after the Conquest, and probably long before. A charter of the reign of Henry I confirms to them all their hunting-grounds as freely as their ancestors had them. These were situated in Middlesex, Surrey and the Chilterns. They also possessed rights of warren at Greenford in Middlesex and at Staines, where they hunted hares, rabbits and birds. The sport was held in sufficiently high estimation by the citizens as to induce them to appoint in 1379 an official called the Common Hunt, whose duty it was to supervise all matters connected with their hunting and fishing grounds. He received a new suit of livery annually, and a fee of £10, which he had to collect from the rent of the Stations in Chepe, stalls surrounding the Great Cross at the corner of Wood Street, and the smaller or Brokyncross near St. Paul's, let by the Corporation to dealers in small wares. In 1382 he complained that the receipts failed to reach the sum of £10, and he was thereafter paid £5 a year out of the Chamber of London, making up the remainder from the rent of the Stations. This office was not abolished until 1807.

It is likely that the hounds were kept on that bank of the ditch farthest away from the City wall, for in 1555 mention is found of the "doghouse" in Moorfields. It was close to this doghouse that it became customary in Mary's reign to bury Protestant recusants who succeeded in cheating the fires of Smithfield by a timely but natural death. The reference in the petition to the

wind being in any point of the north is significant, showing as it does that the kennels were kept along the entire length of the ditch. Combining this with the fact that in the middle ages the entire ditch encircling the City was known as Houndsditch, we get further confirmation of the origin of the name. The latest example of this use of the name is in 1419, when mention is made of Houndsditch, near Newgate.

The City ditch, in early times a real ditch, filled with flowing water, with stone-paved bridges built across it at every gate, and with the old Roman wall for a background, made London a true medieval city. Stow tells us that the walls built by the Romans remained without a ditch until the time of King John, when the citizens dug it 200 feet broad. Modern excavation, however, proves that the Romans did indeed make a ditch, but it had probably long been filled in and obliterated, and its memory forgotten when the new one was started. If the width of 200 feet is not an exaggeration, we shall be enabled to see exactly where the water ran, for during recent rebuilding on the premises of Messrs. Marks & Sons on the south side of Houndsditch a large portion of the wall, including a fine bastion, was discovered about 90 feet behind their street frontage. Accordingly the stream must in the early 13th century have reached well behind the houses on the north of the street. This phase, however, did not last long, and the narrowing of the stream during the next 100 or 200 years is shown by the position of the north side of the street, where houses sprang up here and there in the 15th century on what was then the northern bank. Later, in an effort to maintain the flow of the water in the ditch, its width was further restricted by building a wall of mud

nearer the City wall, leaving what is now the roadway of Houndsditch dry land. In the 15th century it was the law that no building should be erected within 16 feet of the City wall, because the intervening space was regarded as the common soil of the City, and so when houses came to be built they were placed upon the new mud bank, and were the forerunners of what is now the south side of Houndsditch. It will thus be seen that the ditch passed the last phase of its existence between the houses on the south side and the City wall behind them, bearing out Stow's remark that both ditch and wall were hidden from sight by the buildings. The building of these houses was in fact the cause of its final disappearance, for the soil excavated for their foundations and cellars was tipped into the ditch, followed in due course by their domestic refuse.

But long before that time many other causes had contributed to the choking up of the ditch, for the citizens found it a convenient repository for every kind of rubbish. Refuse of another kind thrown into it is shown by a case in 1304, when a man was compelled to swear on the Gospels that he would no longer throw into the ditch the carcases of horses after he had skinned them. Anybody who was situated conveniently for the purpose would erect his household convenience so as to discharge into the ditch, and that this was considered proper and legitimate is shown by a complaint in 1441 made by the keeper of Ludgate Prison that the building operations of a neighbour had prevented the prison latrine from so discharging, as it had always done hitherto. Tanneries were built on the banks as early as 1300 by the White Tawyers, so called because they tanned with alum, who maintained their position for nearly 200 years.

In 1477 they were ordered to cease discharging their trade refuse into the ditch, but as this was found impracticable, they were banished from the City altogether in the following year, and as an inducement to betake themselves elsewhere were promised that if they would erect their tanneries at Southwark or Bermondsey Street they would be allowed to retain the freedom of the City, although living outside it. Here we may witness the origin of the Bermondsey tanning industry,which remains to this day.

The destruction of the City wall, of course, went on side by side with the deterioration of the ditch. Even in Stephen's reign the walls were so ruinous that stones falling from them sometimes blocked the streets. In 1257 they were so "sore decayed and destitute of bulwarks" that Henry III ordered them to be restored. Throughout the middle ages, whenever a public-spirited mayor held office, the citizens would be set to work to repair both wall and ditch, and a specimen of the method by which it was accomplished comes from 1379, when it was agreed that every householder in London should work for one day on cleaning the ditch, or alternatively should hire a labourer to take his place. Each ward of the City turned out one day in rotation, starting with Tower Ward on May 16th and finishing with Aldersgate Ward on June 21st. Unfortunately, a certain jealousy among the rulers of the City often prevented a mayor from completing what his predecessor had begun, and this was a potent cause of the decay of both ditch and wall. Thus in 1476 the Mayor, Rauf Joslyn, persuaded each guild to rebuild a length of the wall, and set the example by causing his own guild to rebuild the part between Allhallows on the Wall and Bishopsgate, but

his successor allowed the scheme to drop for fear that Joslyn would get the credit.

The last scheme for cleaning out the ditch as a whole appears to have been initiated in 1477, but parts of it were attempted up to a much later date, notably at Moorfields in 1540, and between Aldgate and the Tower in 1569. The last effort of all was directed to the portion between Bishopsgate and Moorgate as late as 1595, but quickly got filled up again.

South of Aldgate the ditch ran behind the houses on the west side of the Minories and emptied itself into the Thames on the west side of the Tower near the Postern, being separated from the Tower ditch by no more than a bank. This it overflowed into the Tower ditch in 1354 owing to its choked-up condition, causing the King to send fresh orders for its cleansing. This section, from Aldgate to the Tower, appears to have exceeded all others in depth and breadth, and Stow informs us that in his youth he knew men who had caught and tasted the fish with which it abounded. Here also occurred most of the drowning accidents to people who went bathing, the earliest of which is recorded in 1275, and to carters going to the stream to water their horses.

By the 16th century the other parts of the ditch had from one cause and another adopted other names than the original one, so that the name Houndsditch became restricted to the street at present so called. It was first paved in 1503, and was then and for long afterwards a continuous street from Bishopsgate to Aldgate, with its attenuated wall and ditch flanking its southern side, and without any of those small turnings which at the present time connect it at intervals with Bevis Marks. St.

Mary Axe then ended at Bevis Marks, and where is now the little street which forms its continuation to Houndsditch was the small parish church of St. Augustine on the Wall, or St. Augustine Pappey. This church is mentioned as early as the 12th century, and it has been suggested that its name of Pappey is derived from the town of Pavia in Italy, where the relics of St. Augustine were preserved. In 1442 it ceased to be a parish church because it served no more than ten inhabitants, and was joined to Allhallows on the Wall in Broad Street. It then became an almshouse for poor and aged priests, who were known as the Fraternity of the Papey. The following curious description of it is found in a contemporary document : " Pappy church in the Wall between Algate and Bevis Marks. And it is a great fraternity of priests and of other secular men. And there been found of alms certain priests, both blind and lame, that be impotent ; and they have daily mass and 14d. a week, barber and launderer, and one to dress and provide for their meat and drink." There is some reason to suspect, however, that the fraternity was established at the same place at a much earlier date, for in 1283 a citizen bequeathed to the church, in addition to certain rents in London, a quart of pepper annually. Such a bequest to a parish church would be not only unusual, but useless, and if intended for the personal use of the incumbent it is more usual in old London wills to state so specifically. At the Reformation the house was confiscated, pulled down, and the site built over with the exception of the churchyard, which was reserved for a garden. This garden is almost certainly the little churchyard of St. Martin Outwich in Camomile Street, which about this time was given as an additional burial-

ground to the church of St. Martin Oteswich on the corner of Threadneedle Street and Bishopsgate Street.

There were not many dwellings in Houndsditch before the 16th century. Stow related that in his youth there were no more than a few cottages of two stories, in the lower part of which poor bedridden people used to live. These would lie in their beds with the windows open soliciting the alms of the charitable, and many good citizens would direct their steps that way, especially on Fridays, for the express purpose of bestowing money upon them. Later in the century these invalids were ousted by brass-founders and old-clothes dealers.

There is still one brass-founder left in Houndsditch, but the name of the street has become so inextricably connected with that of the dealers in secondhand clothes that it is interesting to note their appearance in this their historic locality in the 16th century. However, from very early times they were a prominent London trade under the name of Fripperers, having their official rules confirmed by the Mayor and Aldermen, and taking apprentices like any other craft ; at which period the old-clothes market, now situated just behind Houndsditch, was held around the Tun in Cornhill, which stood in the middle of the road opposite where is now the Royal Exchange, and was used by the watch to impound night-prowlers until they could be brought to the Guildhall next morning. Just as interesting, too, is Lydgate's experience of the old-clothes market in the 15th century, where the tradesmen used the same peculiar methods of business that they were credited with in their new locality of Houndsditch until not so many years ago, when it was popularly believed that you could be relieved of your handkerchief at one end of the street and be

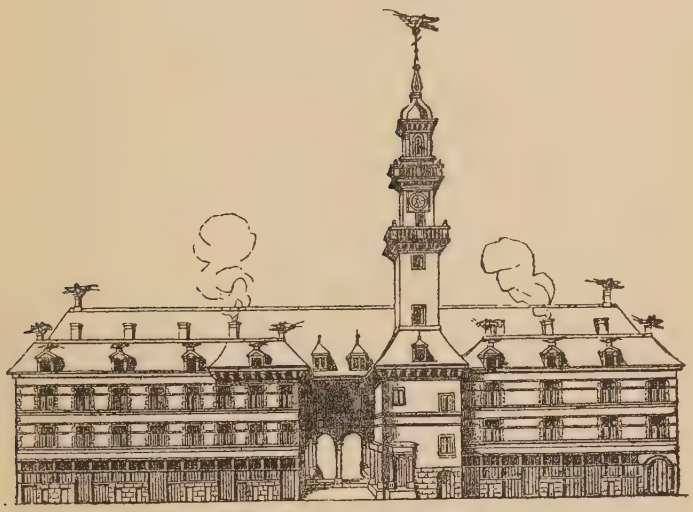
offered it for sale at the other. Lydgate's actual words are :—

> Into Cornhill anon I yede
> Where is much stolen gear among ;
> I saw where hung mine own hood,
> That I had lost in Westminster among the throng ;
> Then I beheld it with looks full long,
> I kenned it as well as I did my creed,
> To buy mine own hood again me thought it wrong,
> But for lack of money I might not speed.

But long before that time, in 1321, complaint was made that they turned the market into an " evecheping " by keeping it open after vespers, and in the gloaming they sold their wares " in deceit of those who bought the same." Although forty-seven of them were prosecuted and fined for this, it appears from a later entry in 1393 that by ancient custom an evecheping could be held in Cornhill on feast days, but at no other time. As, however, it was found that this custom gave rise to the sale of pilfered wares and the practice of harlotry under cover of the pretended sale of goods, a rule was made that the beadle of the ward should ring a bell, the first time an hour before sunset by way of warning, and again half an hour after sunset, when the market should close and all goods be removed.

The old-clothes market in Cornhill was known as the Frippery, and the toll called murage levied there amounted to 1 mark a year, which may be compared with the £10 collected at Smithfield, giving a hint of the relative importance of the two markets. Rules were made that the Fripperers should not furbish up old clothes or fur to sell them as new, and that they should not perform this operation in the main streets except at night, although

they might do so by day in the by-streets. By their migration to Houndsditch in the 16th century, rendered necessary by the building of the first Royal Exchange, which left them no room in Cornhill, the street was fairly launched on that career which has made its name a household word to-day.



THE FIRST ROYAL EXCHANGE

CHAPTER X

BOW LANE

WHEN some ancient and historic spot with sonorous and romantic name achieves something more than a local celebrity, why is it that someone must needs re-christen it in a fashion which reduces it to utter banality? This question arises on contemplating Bow Lane, Cheapside, which started life under the altogether delightful name of Cordwainer Street. It was bad enough when this was changed to Hosier Lane, but surely the depth of ineptitude was sounded when it was further reduced to its modern form. However, we must be thankful that the name which the street conferred upon the ward was allowed to stand, and so we still rejoice in the possession of a Cordwainer Ward.

The streets of Old London were not formally named as are the new ones of to-day; their names grew up by a natural process, so that many would exist for years without possessing one at all. The multiplication of new streets goes on so fast nowadays that the chief difficulty is in finding names to suit them. In this connection it is to be observed that there is no lack of imagination among the officials of the London County Council in finding names of fine old antiquarian vintage for the new thoroughfares cut under the recent housing schemes. It is a pity that many of these are historically misleading, for a stranger wandering unexpectedly among them might be pardoned for supposing that he

had chanced upon some forgotten precinct of an ancient abbey or cathedral.

The name of Cordwainer Street is first found in the 13th century, when it was inhabited by the cordwainers, whose name is derived from the French word "cordwain," meaning leather of Cordova in Spain. But in London a cordwainer was a shoemaker, no matter what kind of leather he used. A certain quantity of leather was imported from Spain during the middle ages, but the London imitation of Cordovan leather, used for shoes of the best quality, was made from goatskin. Other varieties of leather used by the cordwainers were bazen or sheep's leather, calf and ox leather, and it was the constant effort of the authorities to prevent them selling one for the other, or mixing them in the composition of the same shoe. The reason for this anxiety becomes apparent when we find that in the 14th century the price of a pair of shoes of cordwain was sixpence, while a pair of shoes of bazen was sold for fourpence halfpenny. The penalty for this offence was 3s. 4d., fivepence of which was awarded to the person upon whom the shoes had been foisted. Officials were also appointed to go round to the cordwainers' shops and inspect their stocks with a view to seizing any shoes made of mixed leather, and any so found were brought to the Guildhall and, in the quaint language of the ordinance, "burnt or given away, for the love of God, according to their (the overseers) knowledge and good discretion." In the course of a single day in the year 1320 the overseers of the trade seized eighty-one pairs of shoes from nineteen cordwainers for being made of bazen and cordwain mixed.

A clear distinction was drawn between cordwainers and cobblers. Cobblers were not then, as now, men

who repaired old shoes at the order of the individual who owned them ; this work belonged to the cordwainers. Cobblers bought worn-out shoes, repaired them, and resold them to the public, and the perennial quarrel between the two classes, which lasted without intermission for two centuries, revolved around the question as to whether, and if so to what extent, these shoes should be repaired with new leather.

Time after time one party or the other would complain to the King, who would send his writ to the Mayor to make peace between them. The Mayor would call both parties before him at the Guildhall and compel them to come to an agreement as to what rules they should exactly observe in this respect, agreements in which the minutest details were settled. Nevertheless, the trouble was sure to break out again shortly afterwards. In 1410 they amalgamated into one company under the general title of Cordwainers, which did not prevent them from continuing the dispute for another century.

This absorption of the Cobblers naturally had the effect of perpetuating their status of inferiority, and so in 1477 we find that although they were allowed to elect officials called " governors " to oversee their trade, these, on discovering any work which infringed the agreement between Cordwainers and Cobblers, could not take independent action, but had to report to the Wardens of the Cordwainers. At this time there were no more than forty-four cobblers in the City, each allowed to employ one man and a child, the latter not to exceed sixteen years of age. An attempt to eliminate them altogether seems indicated by a decree that their number of forty-four should not be increased, and that if any member of the trade left the City for debt or any other

cause his shop and stock should not be taken over by any other cobbler.

Another kind of shoemaker found in early records was the "chaucer." One such mentioned in 1282 bought forty shillings' worth of silk, from which it may be surmised that he was a maker of fancy shoes.

The shoes for ordinary wear made in the middle ages were not objects of beauty. The toes were broad and ungainly and the heels flat, and they fastened with a strap and buckle, or sometimes two. But when it came to fancy shoes, fashion was driven to extravagant lengths. The narrow-pointed toes were introduced from Bohemia late in the 14th century, and grew so long in course of time that their points had to be fastened to the knee to prevent the wearer tripping over them. In 1464 legislation was passed restricting them to 2 inches, and in 1469 a Papal bull was issued cursing any cordwainer who should make them longer. This was publicly proclaimed at Paul's Cross, but was rendered abortive by certain cordwainers who obtained protection under the Privy Seal to make "pykes" as long as before. The rulers of the Church continually endeavoured to prevent the clergy from following the fashion, as may be seen in Myrc's *Instructions for Parish Priests* :—

> Hast thou been proud of any guise,
> Of anything that thou dost use,
> Of party hose, of pyked shoe,
> Of fittered clothes as fools do?

Another fashion of the time was to cut tracery work on the front of the shoe. Chaucer's allusion, "With Powles wyndow corven on his shoes," suggests that

the great rose window of Old St. Paul's furnished a favourite design for this kind of foot ornament.

The quality of all leather used by the cordwainers had to be tested by four cordwainers and three girdlers, and this was done by sticking a knife into it. A curious ordinance of 1430 stipulates that the actual insertion of the knife shall never be performed by the girdlers, but always by the cordwainers, "according to ancient custom."

Piecework was usually forbidden among the journeymen of the London crafts, but for some reason it was permitted among the cordwainers, who received in the 13th century fivepence for making a dozen pairs of shoes and a penny for making a pair of ankle-boots or top-boots.

In the City records many tales of the cordwainers may be read, some of them amusing, but all displaying the habits of the citizens in early times and the general turbulence which was rife. In 1299 is found an account of a cordwainer cutting up his leather in his house when he was assaulted by the followers of the Bishop of Durham, who struck him on the head with a stick and threw a knife at him. Two men who interfered to protect him were pursued for some distance with drawn swords, until the neighbours assembled and, turning the tables on the Bishop's men, gave them a sound beating.

Another cordwainer in 1302 knocked down the beadle of Bread Street Ward and broke his head on the pavement. The beadle thereupon sued him for £5 damages, but the jury valued his head at no more than 6s. 8d. When the cordwainer failed to pay up, twenty-two pairs of his shoes were seized, valued at

8s., and bestowed upon the beadle on condition that he returned his antagonist the change—1s. 4d.

In 1305 is found a tale of a chaucer who beat his apprentice for "lending" two pairs of his master's shoes. The apprentice ran away, but in the end the chaucer had to take him back and pay damages for having failed to feed and clothe him properly.

In early times we often hear of the "Cordwainery in Chepe." This is because the trade overflowed from Cordwainer Street and occupied Cheapside between Wood Street and Gutter Lane. Like other craftsmen, they used their shops principally for manufacturing purposes, while bringing their goods out into the street for sale. Accordingly they were assigned that part of Cheapside lying between Soper Lane and the corner of Bucklersbury, where alone they were permitted to display their goods for sale. They were not allowed to stand in the street on Sundays, but might sell within their houses.

Stow relates that the Cordwainers when they left their old quarters migrated to St. Martin le Grand, and that the Hosiers who replaced them came from Hosier Lane in Smithfield. No reason for the change can be assigned, but in the City records it can be seen taking place early in the 14th century. In 1305 we find cordwainers living at Newgate, and shortly afterwards at Billingsgate and Gracechurch Street. The earliest record of a hosier in Cordwainer Street appears to be in 1332, when a member of that trade, one John de Flaunden, had a house in Hosier Lane, Smithfield, and a shop in Cordwainer Street. In the following year another hosier bequeathed his shop in Cordwainer Street to his apprentice, John the Cook. Again, in 1348 a wealthy and

pious hosier of Cordwainer Street, John de Holegh, bequeathed £20 to anyone who would make a pilgrimage in his name to the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and the tomb of St. Katherine on Mount Sinai ; also £7 to anyone willing to undertake the journey to St. James of Compostella in Spain. In addition to this he left money to all who would go with naked feet to offer a penny at the shrine of the Blessed Mary at Walsingham.

Such vicarious pilgrimages for the good of one's soul inevitably recall Mark Twain's unique method of scaling Swiss mountains—by " sending Harris "—but in the middle ages the hardships endured by the paid pilgrim were seriously expected to accelerate the purgatorial progress of his employer. In 1361 we find even a butcher leaving money for a pilgrim to visit five shrines, and in the same year another testator left 20s. to anyone who would go with naked feet to the church of St. Thomas at Canterbury and offer a penny at the high altar, a penny at the tomb of St. Thomas, a penny at his head, and a penny at each of three other shrines, with a further 40s. to anyone going with naked feet to St. Mary of Walsingham. The dreadful condition of the roads at the period suggests that the constant allusion to naked feet really means the wearing of sandals instead of shoes.

The above John de Holegh was buried in Bow Church under a slab of marble surmounted by two images with prayers for his soul written round them. He founded several chantries in the church, and took extraordinary precautions to ensure that his benefactions should not sink into oblivion with the passage of time. He provided that all articles in his will affecting the church should be written on parchment and placed on a tablet

at the foot of the image of the Blessed Virgin, at the same time leaving 60s. for painting the image and providing it with a crown.

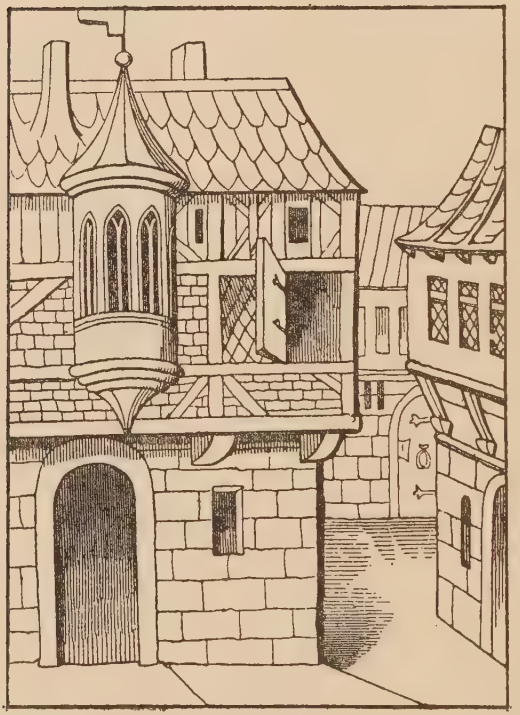
The Hosiers at this time did not possess the monopoly of the street, and individuals belonging to other callings are to be found there quite early in the 14th century. A cookshop was there in 1312, a tailor in 1343, a woolmonger in 1337. In 1349 a goldsmith living there, John de Keleseye, left his house to his wife on condition that she distributed each month as long as she lived one silver penny to each of twelve poor men, three silver pennies to another who should be more infirm than the others, and two silver pennies to a poor woman.

The name of Hosier Lane was first used late in the 14th century, but for many years afterwards both names were used indifferently. The name of Cordwainer Street is still found as late as 1462, while in 1366 a hosier described his shop as being in Cordwainer Street in Hosier Lane in Westchepe. The Hall of the Cordwainers' Company had stood from very early times in close proximity to the place of their settlement—in Distaff Lane, a turning out of Friday Street, and it still retained its ancient position when they left the neighbourhood. Distaff Lane was wiped off the map by the cutting of Cannon Street through to St. Paul's in the 19th century, but by great good fortune it was unnecessary even then to alter the position of the Hall, which is now to be found at No. 7, Cannon Street.

There used to be in early times a garden in Bow Lane which in 1465 was the property of one John Rotham, a tailor, who bequeathed it to Bow Church for an additional burial-ground because Bow churchyard was too small for the requirements of the parish. The garden

continued to be so used for about a hundred years, after which it was discarded for this purpose and built upon.

When in the time of Henry VIII the Hosiers in their turn migrated to other parts, the street was finally renamed Bow Lane, and has so remained to the present day.



MEDIEVAL HOUSES

CHAPTER XI

WATERBEARERS' HALL

MANY of the ancient livery companies of the City of London have fallen upon evil days. Most of them were in being from very early times, leading a sort of unofficial existence by permission of the Mayor and Aldermen, but when during the 14th and 15th centuries they secured an official status by royal grants of incorporation they usually obtained full control over the trade they represented, with power to regulate apprenticeship and standards of manufacture, and a right of search which in some cases extended far beyond the confines of London. Afterwards, by reason of the prescriptive right to membership possessed by the sons of liverymen, even though following some other trade, and the admission of other outsiders for various reasons, they have in many instances lost touch with the craft whose name they bear. Others are in worse case still by reason of the changes in trade which modern conditions have brought about. Some of them, actuated by the feeling that the administration of the charitable funds left in their charge by generations of benevolent citizens does not constitute sufficient activity to justify their existence, make heroic efforts to assist the development of any craft which can be considered even remotely to come within their provenance. Thus, because modern ladies have discarded the once universally used fan and on warm evenings keep themselves cool by waving nothing more complicated than an ostrich

feather, the ancient and influential Company of Fan-makers have found good and useful work to do by encouraging the development of mechanical cooling devices.

Another ancient company which played an indispensable part in the economy of Old London—the Water-bearers—has disappeared altogether. It is not always those who render the most important services to the community who derive the greatest wealth from their labours, and it may readily be understood that men who worked all day at carrying nothing more valuable than buckets of water were never able to achieve high rank among the trade guilds of London. The low estimation in which they were held may be gauged by a remark contained in a complaint made by the Girdlers in 1435, in which they say that the more prosperous members of their craft had engaged so many apprentices that there was no work left for the poorer members, who used to work for the wealthier, in consequence of which they had to earn a living as waterbearers or labourers.

Nevertheless, at one time the Waterbearers were sufficiently prosperous to possess a hall of their own. In Bishopsgate Street, where the terminus of the Great Eastern Railway now stands, was, before removal to its present position just opposite, a well-known cornchandler's shop, and this in former times was Waterbearers' Hall. Owing, however, to the gradual development of the water supply for London brought in pipes from outlying parts, the Waterbearers showed early signs of succumbing to the new conditions. In 1568 their Hall passed out of their hands, and was sold to one Robert Donkin, who thoughtfully bestowed it upon his favourite church, St. Michael Cornhill, ever since which time, until it was

absorbed by the railway, the churchwardens leased it to successive traders.

Individual waterbearers often find mention in the City records. One of the earliest receipts of marriage fees found in the churchwardens' accounts of St. Mary at Hill concerns one of the trade in 1524–5, "Received at the Maryage of Chappell, the waterberer, VId." This Chappell used to be paid eightpence a year for filling the holy-water stocks or buckets in the church, a fee which ten years later was reduced to fourpence. These holy-water stocks were metal buckets. In 1518 we find the church buying thirty-four pounds of metal at twopence a pound, which they sent to a founder, who made out of it two such stoups, and received 3s. 4d. for his pains.

The Waterbearers, like all other City guilds, placed themselves under the tutelage of a patron saint, and selected a church for their especial place of worship. Their choice fell upon St. Christopher and the church of the Austin Friars in Old Broad Street.

Until the later part of the 13th century the entire water supply of London was obtained from the Thames and the local springs and wells. Most great houses contained a well, but others were sunk in the streets for the use of the general public, as, for example, one frequently mentioned by Stow under the name of the "Well with two buckets," situated at the corner of Threadneedle Street and Bishopsgate Street, outside the church of St. Martin Oteswich. There were also various springs within the walls of the City over which charitably disposed persons would from time to time erect conduits, so that the poor could obtain water free of charge. Richard Whittington is credited with several

such charitable enterprises. In 1349 there is record of a spring near the church of St. Antholin in Budge Row, over which an elaborate conduit had been built, with a chamber above it, by a pepperer named William de Hanhampstede. In return for his expenses in this work the parishioners gave him permission to live in the upper chamber as long as he lived. There was another such "fountain," as they were called, in Grub Street, now Milton Street, Cripplegate.

It is always said that water was not conveyed to Ludgate and Newgate prisons until 1432 ; but that some sort of supply existed at Ludgate at a much earlier date, probably drawn from a spring or well, is shown by an affray in 1300, when a man who was conveying a "tyne" or bucket of water from Ludgate was attacked by two men, one of whom was a gaoler of Newgate. These proceeded to fill their own water-pot from his bucket, and when the waterbearer cursed them for their interference, the gaoler's companion took away his stick, hit him on the head with it, and upset the tyne. In the end they had to pay him 2s. damages.

In those days there was no such thing as water laid on in the houses, but that the advantages of such a convenience were even then recognised is attested by the fact that Henry III had such a supply—true, it was only Thames water—installed in his palace of Westminster. The people were simply in too backward a state to embark on what would then have been a huge enterprise. Under such circumstances the utility of the waterbearers is easily realised. They obtained water from the river at the many points of public access and carried it round to the inhabitants in vessels called "tankards," with a capacity of three gallons, and made to fit on men's

shoulders. Another method of conveying water was in leather bottles called "bougets," which were loaded on carts and distributed to the remotest parts of the City. Water was conveyed in this way not only from the Thames, but from the numerous wells to the north of the City, principally in the neighbourhood of Clerkenwell. The owners of such carts were known as "water-leaders," and the charge for carriage which they were entitled to levy was three-halfpence a cartload from Dowgate Dock or Castle Baynard as far as Cheapside, and a penny extra for any farther distance.

The stairs which lead down to the river at many spots along its banks between the Tower and Blackfriars, apparently serving no other purpose than the amusement of small boys who sit upon them and watch the boats go past, must often be a cause of speculation on the part of the idle wanderer who chances to notice them. But, indeed, they are relics of a former age, in which access to the river was a vital and jealously guarded necessity of the people. At such places anyone was free to draw water, to wash clothes, to water horses, or to embark in boats, and any attempt to restrict these rights became an immediate cause of public agitation. Such attempts were frequently made by the owners of adjoining wharves, and from the report made to the visiting justices sitting at the Tower in 1321 it appears that at that time almost every point of access from the Tower to Blackfriars had been enclosed for the purpose of levying tolls. Again, in 1417 general complaints were made that the appropriators of such spots were charging the people a halfpenny, a penny, or even twopence a quarter for the use of what was really public ground. The Mayor, Aldermen and Common Council promptly issued orders

threatening with fine and imprisonment all those who had thus encroached upon the common quays of the City.

In later times various mechanical devices were adopted for pumping up the water of the Thames, but the earliest efforts were only successful in bringing it on to the foreshore. The first, and quite isolated, instance of the kind is in the early 14th century, when water was laid on from the river to a house on the bank at the end of Cousin Lane, near Dowgate. This house was owned by William Cosin, Sheriff in 1306, who gave his name to the lane. It was beside the same house that the first conduit of Thames water was erected in 1568.

At last, in 1580, one Peter Morice, a Dutchman, demonstrated to the authorities of the City his ability to make an engine which would bring the water of the Thames to most parts of the town. The idea was to utilise the flow of water between the arches of London Bridge to work a pump. As Old London Bridge was provided with nineteen arches, the spaces between them were so narrow that the water rushed through with the velocity of a mill-race, constituting a serious danger to boats attempting the passage. Such a force of water was found sufficient to work Morice's pump, which was placed under the north end of the bridge on the west side, not far from the present Fishmongers' Hall. By this means the water of the river was carried to the top of the steeple of St. Magnus's Church, from where it was conducted in leaden pipes to the cross-roads at Leadenhall, where a conduit was erected with four spouts, one pointing to each of the four streets meeting at that spot. Out of these the water gushed at each tide in such quantity, that when the inhabitants had taken away

in their buckets as much as they required, there was still sufficient flowing out to flush the channels of the streets. The conduit was first set going on Christmas Eve, 1582.

The Corporation were so pleased with this achievement that they granted Morice a lease of the water, the spot where his engine stood, and an arch of London Bridge for a period of 500 years at a rent of 10s. a year. The new supply was afterwards carried to other parts of the City. The works remained in possession of the same family until 1701, when they were sold to one Richard Soames for £36,000, who turned the enterprise over to a company. It did not come to an end until 1822, when the company was bought out for £10,000 by Act of Parliament.

Prompted by the example of Peter Morice, the Fishmongers' Company, three years later, in 1583, proceeded to construct an engine to convey Thames water to Old Fish Street, mainly for the use of the members of their own trade who were congregated in the neighbourhood. The enterprise cost £700, which had been left to them for the purpose by Barnard Randolph, Common Serjeant of the City, who died in that year. To hold the water they made two cisterns, one on the north side of the church of St. Nicholas Coleabbey, and the other on the west side of St. Mary Magdalen, Old Fish Street. By 1594 we hear of the first supply of water actually laid on in the houses, and this was Thames water raised by pumps worked by horse-power at Brokenwharf, in Upper Thames Street. It was carried in pipes to Cheapside, Fleet Street, and the neighbourhood of St. Paul's.

Much of the ale consumed in London in the middle ages was made from Thames water, leading to a curious

record in 1326, when, in a season of very high tides, many complained that the popular beverage was unpalatably salt.

The first water supply ever brought into the City from outside was in the 13th century, when the Great Conduit was built at the spot where Cheapside and the Poultry meet. The springs at Tyburn, from which the water was obtained, were granted to the City in 1237, and Stow and other authorities agree that the Great Conduit was built in 1285, when Henry le Galeys was Mayor. This date cannot be quite correct, for it is mentioned in a contemporary chronicle in 1274, when curiously enough le Galeys was serving an earlier mayoralty, and again in 1277 it is mentioned in a London will. It was considered a great wonder at the time, and in their pride at such an achievement the citizens caused it to be built in the most handsome style of crenellated stone-work, within which was the leaden cistern which held the water. Officials were appointed to take charge of it, to hold the keys and allowance out the water, and to keep the accounts. Leaden pipes were laid underground all the way from the springs at Tyburn by which it was supplied, a really stupendous undertaking for those times. Stow tells us that in the same year a conduit was made, supplied from the same source, at the Standard in Chepe by the end of Honey Lane Market.

Although a fee was charged to users of the water at the Great Conduit, money was always wanted for its upkeep and repair and for extending the supply to other parts. Citizens often bequeathed money for this purpose, and other sums were acquired from many odd sources. The first of these we hear of was in 1301,

when a lady who recovered 20s. from a debtor in the Mayor's Court straightway bestowed it upon the conduit. Among many other windfalls of the kind was one in 1467, when a Sheriff dying during his term of office, the man who was appointed to finish the term gave £100 to the conduit on the stipulation that this short period of service should give him exemption from re-election to the same office. In 1495 another man, William Bull, a tailor, gave 100 marks on being excused from filling the office of Sheriff for four years. In 1473 the Hostelers gave £10 towards the conduit for the privilege of changing their name to that of Innholders, and in another case the payment was in the nature of a penalty for presumptuous conduct. This was in 1478, when, as the Mayor was kneeling at the shrine of St. Erkenwald in St. Paul's, one of the Sheriffs ventured to kneel beside him. When the Mayor pointed out this oversight to his subordinate, the Sheriff made a rude reply. The incensed ruler of the City thereupon complained to the Common Council, with the result that the offender was ordered to contribute £50 towards the conduit.

For a long time after the conduit was built the civic authorities felt a pardonable nervousness lest anything should occur to interfere with the ample flow of the water, an attitude displayed in the very first extension of the pipes to another conduit of which we hear. This was in 1390, when the inhabitants of the ward of Farringdon Within wished to remove the old cross known as the Brokyncross near the north door of St. Paul's, and build a conduit in its place by tapping the pipes from Tyburn. The Corporation only gave permission for the scheme on condition that if it proved detrimental to the supply at the Great Conduit it should be removed.

The new conduit was accordingly built, and was known for many years afterwards as the Little Conduit in Chepe.

About the same time a conduit was built in Fleet Street in the middle of the road opposite St. Bride's Church, supplied with water from the same source. The 15th-century chroniclers unite in telling us that it was started in 1438 by Sir William Eastfield, Mayor in that year, and this is confirmed by Stow. Here we have a lesson in the caution which should be observed in accepting the evidence even of contemporaries, for what the chroniclers doubtless refer to is the ornamental structure which took the place of the original conduit, and which, as Stow tells us in another place, was finished in 1471 and in 1478 further beautified "with a fair tower of stone garnished with images of St. Christopher on the top and angels about lower down, with sweet-sounding bells before them, whereupon, by an engine placed in the tower, they divers hours of the day and night chimed such an hymn as was appointed." The original conduit was built in the 14th century by one John Walworth, a vintner, who owned a tavern in Fleet Street, opposite St. Bride's Church. Dying in 1396, he left this tavern for the support of the conduit he had built, and was buried near the elm-tree in St. Bride's churchyard.[1]

The next extension of the water supply from the Tyburn source was in 1401, when it was carried to the Tun on Cornhill, which was pulled down for the purpose and replaced with a conduit, cage, stocks and whipping-post. About the same time it was further extended to the cross-roads at Leadenhall.

The above-mentioned Sir William Eastfield was a great

[1] *Calender of Wills*, vol. ii, p. 324.

promoter of the water supply of London. In his lifetime he started the enterprise of bringing water in pipes from Highbury to Cripplegate and Aldermanbury, a work completed by his executors. By 1483 the inhabitants of Cripplegate had made the cistern and conduit, and petitioned the Common Council to confirm it to them for evermore, and provide that its repair should be undertaken at the cost of the City, the same as other conduits. Towards the end of the 15th century the main water supply was carried down to the cornmarket in Gracechurch Street, where the conduit was built under the will of Thomas Hill, Mayor in 1485. In 1491 the Common Council granted permission to his widow to turn up the soil on the public way for the purpose, and by 1494 the work was completed.

In 1440 the citizens received a further supply of water from springs at Paddington by grant of the Abbot of Westminster, with permission to run pipes underground to the City, except through the manor of Hyde, now Hyde Park. This was the same source from which Westminster Abbey drew its supply, and for its use the City was to pay to the Abbot an annual rent of two pounds of pepper. The Common Council thereupon voted 1,000 marks towards the work, but this sum included repairs to the old conduit. At this time, however, the water was conveyed no farther than Tyburn, and it took until 1447 to accomplish so much. Six years later, in 1453, the executors of Sir William Eastfield agreed to carry it to Marylebone, where a pipe had already been laid leading to Charing Cross. From Charing Cross they also agreed to lay pipes to the City and carry it to various spots which they should select. The Corporation bound themselves in £1,000 not to interfere with the

work in any way, or to divert the water from the places chosen. Notwithstanding these arrangements the water appears to have been conveyed no farther than Charing Cross by 1491, in which year Sir John Fortescue granted a licence for 180 years to the City to break ground for the purpose at the mews at Charing Cross, and also at Covent Garden for as long a period as he or his descendants possessed any interest therein.

By the 16th century all this work was finished, and London had reason to be proud of the completeness of its system of aqueducts leading from the fields in the west to the heart of the City. At that time it became customary for the Mayor, Aldermen and chief commoners to make a State visit of inspection once a year to the conduit heads at Paddington, Tyburn and Marylebone, an event which was invested with all the festivity of a public holiday. The order of the day's ceremonial can be gathered from Machyn's account of it in 1562 : "The 18th day of September my Lord Mayor and my masters the Aldermen and many worshipful men and divers of the masters and wardens of the 12 (livery) companies rode to the conduit heads for to see them, after the old custom ; and afore dinner they hunted the hare and killed, and so to dinner to the head of the conduit, for there was a number, and had good cheer of the Chamberlain ; and after dinner to the hunting of the fox, and there was a goodly cry for a mile, and after the hounds killed the fox at the end of St. Giles (in the Fields), and there was a great cry at the death and blowing of horns ; and so rode through London my Lord Mayor Harper with all his company home to his own place in Lombard Street."

In consequence of these developments conduits sprang

up all over the City. In 1500 we hear of one at the Stocks Market, in 1513 at Bishopsgate. This was just within the gate, and was started by Thomas Knesworth, Mayor in 1505. He gave £60 towards it, and the City paid the rest. In 1528 one was erected at London Wall, and in 1535 at Aldgate, with water brought from Hackney. In 1546 water was brought from springs between Hoxton and Islington to the west end of the church of St. Margaret, Lothbury, and branches were carried to conduits at the east end of the church of St. Stephen, Coleman Street, and at the north end of the same street by London Wall.

But even in the 16th century the difficulty of obtaining water was so great that in order to save the trouble of carrying it considerable distances from the Thames, or from the widely scattered conduits, the citizens would utilise any supply that came handy without too strict a regard to its quality. It is on record that in 1535 there was a small pond in the neighbourhood of St. Mary at Hill in Thames Street, and the churchwardens of St. Mary's bought a pump with which to replenish it from a neighbouring ditch. They then bought timber and employed a labourer to make stairs down to the pond to enable their tenants to use the water.

So precious was the water brought into London from places in the west, that every effort was made to ensure that it was fairly used, and that no one took more than his share. In 1478 a wax chandler was detected in the heinous offence of secretly tapping the pipes in Fleet Street for his own private use. He was arrested and imprisoned in the Bread Street Compter, while the authorities cogitated on the appropriate penalty to fit this new crime. After careful deliberation, they brought

him out of prison and set him on a horse with a vessel made to represent the conduit stuck upon his head. This vessel was filled with water, which trickled out of small pipes fitted into its sides, and whenever it became empty it was immediately refilled. In this manner he was led through the principal streets of the City amid the jeers of the populace.

A different kind of offence against the water supply was committed on November 30, 1560, on which day, to the consternation of the inhabitants, no water could be obtained from any conduit in London except that in Lothbury. It was afterwards discovered that two men had gone round and mischievously cut all the pipes, an outrage for which they were whipped through the streets on December 14th.

During all this period the waterbearers flourished, for it is not until the end of the 16th century that anything is heard of water laid into the houses, and even then in the case of conduit water the privilege was only granted by express resolution of the Corporation, in consequence of which none but people of the greatest consequence attained it. As late as 1641 we find an Alderman bequeathing £5 to his old waterbearer.

The reply of the Lord Mayor in 1608 to the complaint made by the Countess of Essex that her "quill" of conduit water at Essex House in the Strand had been cut off is significant. He states that the water in the conduits was very low, and the poor very clamorous in time of dearth, and complaints had been received of the extraordinary waste of water at Essex House, where it had been used not only for dressing meat, but for the laundry, the stable, and other offices which might have been otherwise served.

It may indeed be suspected that the waterbearers died out rather as the result of the multiplication of conduits than from the domestic water supply being actually brought into the houses, a practice which does not appear to have become general until the 18th century. This seems evident from the fact that the conduits were rebuilt after the Great Fire, and remained in being for some years. They had practically all disappeared before 1720 on account of the obstruction to traffic caused by their position in the middle of the road.

Although London's first water supply and most subsequent ones were brought in leaden pipes to the City, it sometimes happened in later times that hollowed tree-trunks were used for the purpose. Each trunk was tapered at one end, and the bore at the other end widened, so that when laid end to end they fitted together so well as to be practically watertight. Only recently large quantities of these hollow trunks were unearthed in Bishopsgate Street, and many of them may now be seen at the Guildhall. They were probably used for the new supply brought from Chadwell and Amwell in Hertfordshire in the early 17th century.

This was the origin of the New River which the citizens were empowered to construct by Statute of 3 James I. Instead of doing the work themselves, they entrusted it to Sir Hugh Middleton, who by its successful accomplishment may be said to have solved the problem of London's water supply.

CHAPTER XII

WALBROOK

THE proximity of fresh water has always been the determining factor in the foundation of great cities, a fact which tends to become forgotten at a time when railways and an abundant water supply brought from great distances have made us largely independent of the near situation of water for domestic purposes and for transport. In a general sense the situation of London is due to its accessibility from the sea combined with its safe harbourage, but in the more restricted sense the spot on which its growth started was determined by the Walbrook and the ease of sinking wells down to the clay. In early Roman times Walbrook was the western boundary of the City, and throughout the middle ages remained the official line of demarcation between east and west London. Thus in important legal cases a jury would be called half from one side of Walbrook and half from the other, because such a body was regarded as representative of the entire city in a special sense that could have been achieved in no other way. That the importance of the Walbrook to the earliest settlers in London is in no way exaggerated may be gathered from the discovery a few years since during excavations that its bed at the point where it entered the City was 150 feet wide. Stow tells us that near its mouth it was as much as 248 feet wide.

The Walbrook had its rise in the fields at Hoxton, and passing through Moorfields, entered the City at the

point where London Wall and Blomfield Street meet, two arches being made in the wall for its ingress. It must be remembered that no such thoroughfare as Blomfield Street existed in the middle ages, and the wall of London was continuous across the spot where the stream of traffic now turns out of London Wall to Liverpool Street Station.

Immediately within the wall was a bridge across the brook, which it was the duty of the Prior of the monastery of Holy Trinity within Aldgate to keep in repair in return for his possession of the advowson of the neighbouring church of Allhallows on the Wall. Already in the year 1300 the Prior was summoned at the Guildhall for failing in his duty in this respect, leading to an acrimonious dispute between the parties, which dragged on until the Iter was held at the Tower in 1321, when finally the Prior undertook the necessary repairs.

From this point the Walbrook took its course beneath Carpenters' Hall, near which on its banks stood a house with the curious name of "littellondon," and in a south-westerly direction to a spot beside the church of St. Margaret in Lothbury. From here it ran down to St. Mildred's Church in the Poultry, but in its course it appears to have made a bend which caused it to touch Coleman Street on its way. In excavations in Coleman Street have been found a Roman boat-hook and a coin of Allectus, who ruled in Britain towards the close of the third century. In making Princes Street early in the 19th century its course was found below the surface embanked with wooden piles, which, by reason of the Roman coins, tools and pottery discovered at the same time, must be regarded as Roman work. The conclusion from these facts is that the Walbrook was navigable

as far as Coleman Street in the time of the Roman occupation.

From St. Mildred's Church the stream continued a southerly course across Bucklersbury, and immediately to the west of the present street of Walbrook, which was built upon its eastern bank, and so along the west of Dowgate Hill to the Thames. Here it can still be seen gushing out by anyone standing on the opposite side of the river, although in these days it more nearly resembles a drain-pipe than a river.

The name of Walbrook is generally considered to be of great antiquity, and has even been derived from an event occurring during an early period of the Roman occupation. Geoffrey of Monmouth, a 12th-century writer, relates how at the beginning of the 4th century the Britons broke through the wall of London to attack Gallus and his Romans, who were holding the City, and finally cut off the heads of their opponents upon a brook within the City, which from this circumstance they named Nautgallim, becoming Gallem-bourne in the Saxon tongue. Stow says that this event happened in the year 290, and that the Saxon form of the name was Gallus or Wallus Brook. However, it is much more likely that the name is derived from the simple fact that the Walbrook flowed through the City wall.

It may be suspected, indeed, that the name was not generally applied to it so early as has been supposed, for the earliest contemporary document in which it is mentioned gives it no name at all. This is a charter granted by William the Conqueror in 1068 to the church of St. Martin le Grand, and has been translated by A. J. Kempe in his history of that church in the following terms : " I give and grant to the said church, for the

redemption of the souls of my father and mother, all the land and moor without the postern which is called Cripplegate, on either side of the postern, to wit, from the Northern angle of the City wall, where a rivulet of springs (the Fleet River) near thereto flowing, marks it out from the wall, as far as *the running water which enters the City*." The earliest mention of the Walbrook in the City records appears to be in 1277, when several entries occur, including a reference to one William of Dunstable, a skinner, who owned a stone house at Horseshoe Bridge over the Walbrook near the corner of Cloak Lane.

In the 13th century and much later the Walbrook was still an open stream all the way through the City, as is shown by its frequent use as a landmark in deeds and leases. In 1294 an agreement for the letting of a house near the church of St. Margaret Lothbury mentions that the landlord reserves to his own use a garden near the Walbrook. Throughout the middle ages St. Mildred's Church in the Poultry is frequently referred to as St. Mildred's upon Walbrook, and as late as 1420 the stream is indicated as the bound of a piece of land bequeathed to the parishioners of that church for a burial-ground.

It was not without a struggle that the citizens lost their river, which, as the population increased, tended to become choked with every kind of refuse. Orders to refrain from polluting it and efforts to keep its bed scoured were innumerable. The earliest of these to find its way into the records was in 1277. It appears that long before that time each house upon the banks was compelled to have a grating, which probably means a fence, between it and the stream, but many of these having disappeared in course of time, they were now

ordered to be replaced, and at the same time the course of the brook to be cleaned of filth. During the 14th century one plan after another was adopted with the same object, but each in its turn fell into abeyance. In 1345 nine citizens were appointed to see that no impediment of any sort was placed in the stream. The futility of such efforts is shown by the grant by the Corporation in 1374 of a seven years' lease of Moorfields free of rent to a certain Thomas atte Ram, a brewer, on condition that he kept the brook clean and open. In 1383 a new plan was adopted : the Walbrook was ordered to be kept clean under the supervision of the Aldermen of the wards through which it passed. These were the wards of Coleman Street, Chepe, Walbrook, Vintry and Dowgate.

One potent cause of the deterioration of the water-course is revealed in 1415, when the Common Council ordered that a public latrine on its banks just inside the City wall should be removed and re-erected just outside, and a sluice constructed to carry away the refuse. In 1463 they further ordered that all of these should be done away with along its entire course.

The first effort towards the canalisation of the brook was made in 1415, when all those possessing houses on that part of Walbrook near the Thames were ordered to wall the banks. In 1463 this order was extended to the entire course, the inhabitants of which were ordered to vault it over and pave it. Each was to be responsible for that part opposite his own house or land as far as the middle of the stream, and any refusing to obey were threatened that their land would be forfeited and given to others who were willing to execute the work.

By this time, however, the process of vaulting the stream had been accelerated by the increase of bridges

across it at various points to accommodate the increasing traffic of the City. In early times the Walbrook appears to have possessed only three bridges within the City walls—that at Blomfield Street already mentioned, one at Bucklersbury, and another, known as Horseshoe Bridge, where the stream crossed the present Cloak Lane, then called Horseshoe Bridge Street. The most important of them was the bridge at Bucklersbury, which was situated against the chancel of St. Stephen's when that church was on the bank of Walbrook and on the opposite side of the street from its present position.

Until the 13th century the Walbrook was navigable as far as this point, and the barges, laden with pepper, spices, tin and lead, used to discharge at the wharves at Bucklersbury. The influence which this condition, existing from early times, exercised upon the peculiar layout of the centre of the City as we see it to-day, where every street radiates from the Mansion House as from a central hub, is a crucial fact of London topography. The landing of such goods as groceries, metals and wool at what may be termed the head of the Walbrook caused the immediate neighbourhood—Bucklersbury, Walbrook, the site of the Mansion House and Soper Lane—to assume the aspect of a great wholesale market, where the foreign merchants assembled with the citizens to sell the wares they brought with them and to purchase in exchange the English wool. So Bucklersbury and the vicinity became the home of the Pepperers, Spicers and Apothecaries, and the market for groceries. In 1346 we hear of one Richard the Young who is referred to as a " spicer of Walbrook." These trades, because they were among the earliest to sell their goods by weight, were sometimes known as " men of the mistery of averdupois,"

and their later name of Grocers also carries the significance of goods in bulk.

Bucklersbury itself owes its name to an early family of importers named Buckerel, whose bury or great mansion it was. There is no doubt that it occupied almost entirely what is now the street of Bucklersbury, and even in 1277 the name was still applied to the house rather than to the street, although no longer owned by the family, but by one Roger Beyvin. It had a courtyard with a great gate, a courtyard which gradually became built over, for in 1312 there is reference to a tenement upon Walbrook within the great gate. Later on, so Stow tells us, the remains of this house were known as the Old Barge, in memory of the barges anciently discharging there, but by that time Bucklersbury was a street as we see it to-day.

In early times this house and three others had the duty of keeping the bridge in repair, and as a perpetual reminder of the fact a large stone stood in front of each. An inquisition appointed by the Corporation in 1291 reported that these stones had disappeared some time since and the bridge fallen out of repair, and a further inquisition in 1300 concluded that the duty really rested with the parishioners of St. Stephen's.

Another early family of importers owning a wharf on the Walbrook was that of de Gisors, who built their mansion not far away on what is approximately the site of the present fire station in Cannon Street, and called it Gisors Hall. This was one of the most splendid and famous mansions of Old London, built, as Stow tells us, upon arched vaults, and possessing arched gates, all built of Caen stone. In later times it became a hostelry under the corrupt name of Gerards Hall. By the 19th

century none of it was left but its crypt, a structure of great architectural beauty, which was excavated in 1852, and later removed altogether for the widening of Cannon Street. Its stones were carefully numbered and removed to the Crystal Palace for re-erection there as an example of an ancient London house. The visitor, however, journeying to Sydenham with the object of studying such a curious relic, will find no visible sign of it, but can exercise his imagination on the prehistoric beasts which adorn the gardens, into whose bodies the stones of Gisors Hall are said to have been incorporated.

The name of the street of Walbrook must not delude us with the idea that the stream flowed down its middle ; in fact, its course was at the back of the houses on the west side of the street. Walbrook was just an ordinary long, narrow City lane, with St. Stephen's Church at one end and St. John's at the other. St. John's was on the north corner of Cloak Lane, and in the middle ages this part, now called Dowgate Hill, was all included in Walbrook. This is proved by an agreement of the year 1292 for letting a house next to the church, where the property is described as being between the church on the south, Candlewyck Street on the north, the course of Walbrook on the west, and Walbrook Street on the east. It is true that in early times there are many references to the "strete of Dowgate," but this probably refers either to the part between Cloak Lane and Thames Street, or else to the lane now known as Dowgate Dock. The term Dowgate Hill is first heard in the 17th century.

The church of St. John the Baptist upon Walbrook was founded in 1181. At first it stood back from the street, but in 1412 the appropriation of 5½ feet of land in front of it for the widening of Walbrook brought it to

the street front. In return for the land so yielded up the parishioners were granted a hundred years' lease, at a rent of a penny a year payable to the Corporation, of a piece of waste land on the north of the church and a foot of the public soil to the south for the purpose of enlarging their church. This transaction displays the personal interest evinced at that time by the Mayor and other high officials of the City in matters even of such relative unimportance, for it is recorded that before granting the land the Mayor, Recorder, the Sheriffs, eleven Aldermen, the Chamberlain, the Common Pleader and a number of commoners accompanied the sworn masons and carpenters of the City to the spot to view and measure it.

St. John's was the church of the Skinners, and in 1461 one of them arranged by his will that he was to be buried in the chancel beside the seat where he had been wont to sit. In 1496 another of the same trade, John Draper, bequeathed to the church 40,000 bricks, to be delivered to them at the rate of 10,000 a year for four years, wherewith to build their belfry.

An incident in the church in 1324 illustrates how in the middle ages the strong arm of the Church could protect even the most impudent malefactor. Notwithstanding that St. John's was the church of the Skinners, a man took sanctuary there after murdering one of their number, and, admitting his crime to the Coroner and Sheriffs, refused to surrender. Under these circumstances neither the authorities nor the fellow-craftsmen of his victim would dare to touch him, and soon afterwards he seized an opportunity to escape and got clear away.

Before the Fire of 1666 St. John's was a rectangular

church about 65 feet long and 36 feet wide, with the tower at the west end, containing a peal of five bells and a clock. It was not entirely consumed by the fire, and the remnant was shortly afterwards reopened for public worship under the name of "The Tabernacle." This did not last long, and later the ground was cleared, and the churchyard alone allowed to remain until most of it was taken by the Underground Railway in 1884, when all the bones were collected and deposited in a vault surmounted by a monument with a suitable inscription, which may still be seen near the corner of Cloak Lane.

In Dowgate Hill are three company halls—those of the Tallow Chandlers, the Dyers, and the Skinners. Dyers' Hall has only been in the possession of that company since the 17th century, but Skinners' Hall has existed on the same spot since the reign of Henry III, and has been devoted to its present purpose all that time, except for a brief interval in the early 14th century. Its original name was Copped Hall, a name indicating some distinguishing feature connected with its roof, perhaps a stone or leaden roof at a time when most houses were thatched.

During the middle ages the Skinners, as has been suggested above, were congregated in Walbrook, and more particularly the Dowgate end of the street in the neighbourhood of their hall and the church of St. John the Baptist. From here their houses and shops extended along Budge Row, where lived the dealers in budge, or lambskin with the fur dressed outwards. In the ordinances of the trade, formulated in 1365, it is laid down that all the members shall dwell in Walbrook, Cornhill and Budge Row, and not elsewhere, "For if they do not dwell together in the said streets, the overseers cannot

duly do their duty, or visit them ; and then those dwelling elsewhere in foreign streets may make deceits in the said trade, against the Ordinances aforesaid, and without any punishment for the same." Here we have a contemporary explanation of the well-known phenomenon of the segregation of each London craft in its own particular district, and, it may be added, a reason for the fact often noticed that most of them gradually disappeared from their ancient haunts in the 15th century. The natural desire of every tradesman to carry on his own business in his own way would induce each craftsman, when the opportunity presented itself, quietly to remove to some other part of the City to where the supervisors were less likely to extend their activities.

The Skinners were divided into two religious fraternities—of Corpus Christi and of Our Lady—and both were attached to the church of St. John upon Walbrook. At a meeting of the company in 1472 it was resolved, most probably in confirmation of a more ancient custom, that the Wardens of the craft should supply annually a new hood of the livery to each member of the fraternity of Our Lady at the member's expense. On the day of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin (August 15th) all the members, wearing these hoods, were to assemble at the church of St. Thomas of Acon in Chepe, now the Mercers' Hall, with the Wardens at their head, and march from there to the church of St. John upon Walbrook to attend High Mass. The same fraternity also maintained the five candles which stood on the beam in front of the rood in the same church, in memory of the five wounds of Christ, to burn at divine service on every great feast day of the year. They employed their own priests, to each of whom they gave yearly a new gown on

payment of fourpence. They also kept in stock several sets of gorgeous vestments for the use of the priests when officiating in the church. Some of these were of cloth of gold embroidered with ostrich feathers, or of red or yellow silk or satin. They also possessed their own altar cloths of similar materials and decoration for use on the same occasions.

At the other end of the street of Walbrook the church of St. Stephen finds mention as early as the end of the 11th century. In those days it was on the west side of the street, being founded originally on the bank of the brook. As for that reason it was impossible to extend it when the increasing population required more accommodation, and the same applied to its churchyard, it was resolved in 1429 to transfer it to its present position, on the east side of the street. Robert Chichley, a grocer, and Mayor in 1422, gave the ground on which the new St. Stephen's was built, and paid in addition a large proportion of the cost of its erection. He was a man of large charity, and by his will appointed that a good dinner should be given each year on the anniversary of his death, known as his " mind day," to 2,400 poor householders of the City, each of them to have twopence in money as well.

In addition to the burials in the churchyards, it was customary in the middle ages to inter the more opulent parishioners in the deep vault which was dug beneath the chancel of the church, the coffins being stacked in serried ranks from floor to ceiling. So it was that during repairs to St. Stephen's in 1850, 4,000 coffins were found below the pavement, and their condition was such that they were immediately arched over with brickwork and concrete to prevent the escape of noxious odours.

The famous Vicar of Bray is said to have been at one time Rector of St. Stephen's.

There are many records of skinners buried in both the churches of Walbrook and of grocers in St. Stephen's, whose wills often contain curious clauses bearing upon the customs of medieval London. A skinner named Blase de Bury, buried in St. Stephen's, bequeathed his two apprentices, or rather the unexpired portion of their term of service, one to a fellow-craftsman and the other to a lady living in Wood Street, so that she might teach him her trade, the nature of which is not specified. The widow of a grocer, buried in St. Stephen's in 1477, described herself in her will as a "citizen and free-woman of the City of London." She, among many others, mostly skinners, left property for the purpose of founding a chantry within the church. This property was to be administered by the rector, who was to have twenty pence a year for his pains. Another grocer, buried in the same church in 1491, rejoiced in the curious name of Thomas Oo.

Next to the church of St. Stephen was formerly a mansion known as Walbrook House, the home in the 17th century and earlier of the family of Pollexfen, whose peculiar habit it was to bury deceased members of their family in a vault beneath their own house. When the church was rebuilt in 1673 they so far departed from tradition as to have a new vault constructed under the church near the Communion Table, but, as a concession to the family foible, with an entrance from their own cellar. Walbrook House was a splendid specimen of the wealthy houses of the period, with a noble Corinthian front and a fine carved staircase inside.

Until the year 1762 none of the houses in the London

streets were numbered, and it was only for a hundred years or so before that time that the majority of them were even named. It is probably for this reason that the early records of London furnish us with so few house names in the street of Walbrook. On the east side of that part now known as Dowgate Hill was one great mansion known as the Erber, standing near the church, now demolished, of St. Mary Bothaw. The Erber is first heard of in the time of Edward III, who gave it to Geoffrey Scroope, after which it passed through many hands until it came into the possession of the Duke of Clarence, brother of Edward IV. In Elizabeth's reign it was the residence of the famous Francis Drake, and in 1392 the Common Beam was kept there. This was the public balance for weighing goods in bulk, and its custody was in that year granted to John Spencer on the understanding that he should occupy the Erber in person.

Although in the early records no other houses in the street are particularised by name, many entries give us a graphic description of events in Walbrook which display it as a typical City lane, full in the daytime of the noise of work and business, and at night with dimly burning lanterns which served but to enhance the dark shadows thrown by the overhanging gables. Here, out of sight of the passing watch, loiterers would hide for the purpose of inveigling the passer-by into houses where dice-play was kept up all night, or would spring out with bared weapon for purposes of robbery. The records of the City teem with cases concerning ruffians who prowled the streets and lanes to assault the watch or to rob belated citizens. Drink appears to have been at the root of most of these disturbances, for the bloods of the period used

to spend the evening in taverns with dice-play and hard drinking, and then issue out on marauding expeditions armed with sword and buckler. An example in 1281 mentions numbers of men arraigned "for divers trespasses, as for homicides, robberies, beatings, assaults, and for being vagrants by night after curfew in the City with swords and bucklers, and for instituting games near the City and keeping houses of ill-fame, contrary to the peace of the lord the King and contrary to the ordinance and provision of good men of the City aforesaid."

Much of these troubles was due to no more than the frolicsome exuberance of youth, finding self-expression in boisterous games. Thus, in 1302 occurs an account of a party of young roysterers who must needs fill an empty cask with stones and roll it down Gracechurch Street to London Bridge until their noise awoke the entire neighbourhood. The adventures of the same youthful band on the following night, when they set upon and beat the watch of Walbrook, show that that noble sport of the 18th century was a good deal older than its exponents knew of. Such violent characters of the night were known by the apt title of "rorers," and others of lesser degree with whom the watch had to deal were the "petie pickers, and persons otherwise of naughtie disposition."

The most hilarious season of the year in the streets was Christmas-time, when special arrangements were made to augment the watch, the Alderman of the ward often turning out in person at its head, while to assist in the preservation of the peace every house was compelled to hang out a lantern. Every year just before Christmas orders were issued forbidding the performance of plays, interludes, mumming, the keeping of open

houses all night for purposes of dice-play, and the wearing of masks and false beards and noses. The occasional ineffectiveness of these precautions, however, is illustrated at Christmas-time in 1300, when we get a picture of three "rorers" in Walbrook assaulting the watch with drawn swords, and then, hiding in the shadow of the houses as they fled, making their way to La Riole, or Tower Royal, from whence they made good their escape.

Perhaps the earliest reference to an event in Walbrook is in 1236, when a boy riding down it on a horse was thrown and killed by reason of his mount being frightened by a passer-by. The man responsible was imprisoned for his folly and afterwards fined half a mark, or 6s. 8d.

By the 17th and 18th centuries most of the houses appear to have acquired names, but by that time the earlier picturesque house-names of London, which usually consisted of something "on the hoop," had died out, and in Walbrook are found names which were then typical of every street in the City, such as the Plough, the Star and the Sugar Loaf.

CAGE AND STOCKS ON OLD LONDON BRIDGE

CHAPTER XIII

THE GARDEN CITY

HENRY MACHYN, citizen and merchant tailor of London, relates in his Diary how in the year 1563 a wooden stile caught fire, and might have caused a serious conflagration had not the flames been promptly quenched. There would appear to be nothing remarkable in this were it not for the circumstance that the stile stood at a spot where one would be least likely to look for such a thing, at the corner of Bow Lane and Watling Street. It is, indeed, a reminder of the fact, too often lost sight of, that as late as the time of Queen Elizabeth, and long before, London was a veritable garden city.

There was then a sharper line drawn between town and country than anything which can be observed to-day, a distinction due to the ancient method of town-planning, under which the citizens kept their dwellings behind the protection of their massive walls, few venturing to build outside. Thus throughout the middle ages the open country reached right up to the City walls, interspersed with farms and dairies which served the citizens with a substantial part of their food. Stow tells us that even in his young days there was a market garden abutting on the north side of Houndsditch just beyond the City wall where herbs and roots were grown for the London market.

Besides farms and market gardens, there were, especially on the north side of the City, many open fields which were the playgrounds of the people, where they took

their walks on summer evenings and conducted their sports. The citizens regarded these amenities as an important part of their ancient privileges, and would offer determined opposition to any attempt at enclosure on the part of the local population. An example of spontaneous popular action in such a case is related by Stow as occurring early in the 16th century, when the inhabitants of Shoreditch, Hoxton and Islington enclosed with hedges and ditches the "common fields" where the citizens of London had been wont to practise archery. Assembling one morning to the cry of "Shovels and spades," a great crowd of citizens, armed with these implements, marched out to the offending districts, where they quickly levelled the hedges and filled up the ditches.

In early times the least rural of the suburbs of London was on the west, because that was the river-side way to the King's Palace of Westminster. Here, as early as the 12th century, was a succession of buildings between the two cities, but nevertheless interspersed with gardens, orchards and trees.

The neighbourhood of the Court furnished similar reasons for a like development in the direction of Holborn in the 13th and 14th centuries, where sprang up many inns for travellers, some of which in later times became the inns of Court and palaces of the nobles. Among the last-named, Lincoln's Inn, the first settlement in London of the Templars, became a famous place of gardens and orchards where all the native fruits grew in profusion. It seems appropriate here to mention the garden of Ely Place in Holborn, made familiar by the oft-quoted lines from *Richard III* :—

> When I was last in Holborn,
> I saw good strawberries in your garden there;

The incident thus celebrated by Shakespear is related by Stow in his *Annals* as a historical fact occurring at the Tower when the lords were meeting to discuss arrangements for the Coronation of Edward V. To them entered the Duke of Gloucester in unaccustomed merry mood and addressed the Bishop of Ely in these words : "My lord, you have very good strawberries at your garden in Holborn, I require you let us have a mess of them." "Gladly, my lord (quoth he), would God I had some better thing as ready to your pleasure as that." And then in all haste he sent his servant to Ely Place to get some for the Duke. Ely Place was a cultivated garden as early as 1290, when John de Kyrkeby, Bishop of Ely, bequeathed it to his bishopric, after which it was identified with that see until the 18th century.

Down the river in the opposite direction it was not until the 16th century that London spread to Ratcliff, Wapping, Shadwell and Limehouse, places which up till then had been mere hamlets in the fields. At the same period the main highways leading out of the City through the gates gradually assumed the aspect of continuous streets, producing a sort of cartwheel effect, with fields and farms remaining between the spokes.

That the suburbs grew no farther than this, even down to the days of Queen Elizabeth, is shown by records of her progresses. A description of one of these in 1561 shows the Queen paying a visit to the Tower to inspect her new gold coinage, after which she passed by Aldgate, through Houndsditch and along Bishopsgate Street as far as St. Mary Spital (now Spital Square), and from there across the fields to the Charterhouse. Three days later she went from the Charterhouse, again across the fields, to the Savoy. A spot in Bishopsgate Street

close to where she passed—Primrose Street—is recorded at the same time to have been the site of twenty-two gardens. As showing the same condition existing farther west, it is related that in the following year the Mayor and Aldermen went a-hunting and killed a fox at St. Giles in the Fields.

At the same time, and for centuries earlier, Moorfields was a noted place of gardens, except at times when it degenerated into a swamp by reason of the vacillating policy of the Corporation, the owners of the ground. A swamp it was in early times through the overflowing of the Walbrook, which failed to carry all its water through the choked-up entrance in the City wall. In the 13th century it was a place of long grass intersected by channels capable of navigation by boats, where the tanners, by reason of its suitable conditions, made it the scene of their operations.

An expedition of the Mayor and Aldermen to view their property of Moorfields is recorded in 1412, when, passing through Moorgate, then only a small postern in the wall, they found the moor covered with gardens, trees and hedges, and promptly ordered them all to be removed. By 1415 they had repented of this decision, and ordered the moor to be again divided into gardens and let to the citizens. At the same time, for the convenience of the tenants, they built a new gate in place of the postern and called it Moorgate. Once again, in 1498, the gardens were done away with and the place made into a plain field in the interests of the practice of archery, at which every young citizen was expected to make himself proficient. In 1487 clay was dug from Moorfields to make bricks for the repair of the City walls, and that it was in no better condition by the middle

of the 16th century is shown by an entry in Machyn's Diary in 1556 of a woman drowning herself there "in the corner by the tree."

The largest open spaces within the City walls were those attached to the conventual establishments. The grounds of the Grey Friars in Newgate Street occupied a large corner space within the walls on the north side of the street, and reached from St. Martin le Grand to Newgate. After the Reformation the ground was let out in gardens and many new houses built. The site is now partly occupied by Christ Church and the General Post Office. The Black Friars, the Carmelites or White Friars, the Crutched Friars and the monastery of Holy Trinity all possessed grounds of considerable extent, while those of St. Helen's extended in one direction from Bishopsgate Street to St. Mary Axe, and in the other from the church of St. Ethelburga to Leadenhall Street. But perhaps the largest of them all was the garden of the Austin or Augustinian Friars, which stretched from London Wall to Lothbury, and from Broad Street to Coleman Street. It was enclosed by a wall which in Broad Street ran behind the shops and houses fronting the street, and its great south gate is still represented by the arched entrance to Austin Friars in Old Broad Street.

After the dissolution of the monasteries, which in London preceded the attacks on the parish churches, the lands of the Augustinians were divided between Richard Ryche, Sir William Paulet and Henry VIII's chief instrument in his confiscations, Thomas Cromwell. Part of the Friars' church was given to the Dutch Protestant congregation in London, and still remains, though much repaired, as the Dutch Church in Austin

Friars. The steeple and other parts of the church went to Paulet, whose son, after using them as a stable, sold them to a man who insisted on pulling them down in spite of the protests of the Mayor and Aldermen. Sir William Paulet proceeded to close all the footpaths which ran through his new property, including one which, passing through the middle of the ground, had been from ancient times open to the citizens and saved them a considerable detour on their way from London Wall to Lothbury. He soon built his great house there, which, on his being created Marquis of Winchester in 1551, became known as Winchester House, and is still represented by the building of that name and the two Winchester Streets.

Thomas Cromwell built his house in Throgmorton Street. This was afterwards bought by the company of Drapers to be their hall, and still stands on the site. The gardens of the Austin Friars were not obliterated by these alterations, but became the Drapers' Gardens, used for the disport of members of the company and their friends, and afterwards, until well into the 19th century, were thrown open for the enjoyment of the general public. In the early part of the 16th century these pleasure gardens extended all the way from Throgmorton Street to London Wall on the line of what are now Drapers' Gardens and Copthall Avenue, the part near London Wall being gardens attached to the hall of the Leathersellers' Company before they removed to their present position in St. Helen's Place.

Many of the other livery companies possessed pleasure gardens attached to their halls, laid out with vines, terraces and summer-houses, where the members could spend their leisure hours in the enjoyment of fresh air

and the game of bowls. In many cases other citizens could partake of the same amenities by paying for a key of admission. The Merchant Tailors had fine grounds which reached from their hall in Threadneedle Street back to Cornhill. Another such was Salters' Hall in Cannon Street, while the Fishmongers had a pleasure garden in the parish of St. Andrew Undershaft, left to them in 1501 by Richard Knight, a member of their company. The actual spot appears to be marked by the present Fenchurch Avenue, with Fishmonger Alley leading up to it from Fenchurch Street.

Perhaps the most famous of these company gardens was that of the Grocers, attached to their hall in Conyhope Lane (now Grocers' Hall Court), in the Poultry. The hall is said to be founded on the site of a Jewish synagogue of the 13th century. It was bought by the Grocers from the Lord Fitzwalter in 1411, and a few years later they built their hall and laid out their garden. The company's records show that in 1428 they paid 13s. 4d. for vines to grow before their parlour window, besides £8 8s. 7d. to build an arbour and to rail off the garden. In 1433 they enlarged the garden by the purchase of more ground and laid it out with alleys, hedgerows, and a bowling-alley. They became famous for their grape-vines, and in the 16th century the garden was a fashionable resort for the wealthier citizens.

Many of the great houses of the merchants were similarly equipped with large and well-laid-out gardens, with their bowling-alleys and pavilions. Gresham House in Bishopsgate Street may be mentioned as one of these, with its front entrance in Bishopsgate Street and its back entrance in Broad Street. Another was on the west side of Noble Street, abutting on the City wall near the gate

of Aldersgate, and occupied the site of that unsightly mass of bricks and mortar which now extends from opposite the end of Oat Lane to Falcon Square. Stow tells us that it measured ninety-five ells in length and nine and a half in breadth, and was surrounded by a stone wall. It was the property of the Corporation, and was leased by them in 1374 to John de Neville, Lord of Raby, and his two sons for their lives and for sixty years after the death of the longest liver at 6s. 8d. a year. In the lease it is described as lying opposite Staining Lane and the church of St. Olave, Monkwell Street. At the north end of the ground facing Falcon Square they built their great house of stone and timber.

Aldersgate was a neighbourhood of gardens. There was one on each side of the gate which used to be let by the Corporation, together with the rooms over the gate. In 1337 they let them to a carpenter for 26s. 8d. a year, but in 1375 they granted them free of charge to the Common Pleader so long as he held office.

Not far away, on the site of the present Jewin Street, leading from Aldersgate to Red Cross Street, was a garden called the Jews' Garden, which was the only burial-ground of London's Jewish population before their expulsion in 1290. In 1349 it was owned by a man named Reymundy Burdeaux, and a goldsmith, Hugh Wetherby, bequeathed it in 1422 with its dovecot to the Goldsmiths' Company. It still retained its old name in the 16th century, when it was made into public gardens and summer-houses.

The Guildhall itself in early times possessed, like other houses, its garden, or rather two of them, a greater and a lesser, and these sometimes went by the proud title of " the garden of the City." Stow tells us that before

its rebuilding early in the 15th century the Guildhall was no more than a cottage in Aldermanbury, which may well be true, for after the rebuilding we hear no more of its gardens. As early as 1311 a good tale appears in the records of how they got the garden wall built for nothing. Next door to them was an ironmonger who wanted to build a house, and so they granted him a strip of their garden 3 feet wide with permission to build upon it at his own expense a wall 14 feet high. When completed, he was allowed to place his joists on two-thirds of its thickness, leaving the remaining third at the disposal of the Corporation. A stipulation was made that he should cut no doorway in the wall to lead into the Guildhall garden. The lesser garden of the Guildhall adjoined Bakwell Hall in Basinghall Street, and contained a storage shed. In 1337 we hear of a quantity of building stone removed from this shed to the Guildhall cellar.

Next to the Guildhall on the west was another garden which, with its house, extended south to the churchyard of St. Lawrence Jewry, and must have stood practically on the site now occupied by the police court. This house and garden belonged, as did the rectory of the church, to the master and scholars of Balliol College, Oxford, who in 1342 let a quarter of it to the vicar of the church for 20s. a year and the remaining three-quarters to a mercer for 60s. a year.

Such ownership of the rectory of a church by lay people as that just mentioned was a form of investment before joint-stock companies came into existence, and when the receipt of interest on money lent was regarded as a crime. The proprietor of a rectory would gather the tithes, pay for the hire of a vicar to carry on the work of the church, and pocket the balance remaining.

In 1325 we find a priest leaving all his property in London for the purchase of a suitable rectory to provide an income for University College, Oxford. Even a portion of a rectory could be purchased, and so in 1358 a man describes himself as rector of half a church. An investment of this kind could not be made without the sanction of the bishop, which seems to have been granted when the purpose was religious, charitable or educational. Nevertheless, in 1368 a Sheriff of London is found bequeathing a rectory to his wife.

Another great house with its garden was Northumberland House, next to the lately destroyed church of St. Katherine Colman, in Fenchurch Street. It occupied what is now Lloyds Avenue and Northumberland Alley, and its grounds extended south to Crutched Friars. In the 15th century it was the home of the Percys, Earls of Northumberland. When in the 16th century they left it for a residence in the West End it was laid out with bowling-alleys and gaming-houses. Stow tells us that at first this was the only public resort of its kind, but was afterwards done away with and cottages built on the site by reason of the multiplication of rival establishments, which drew its patrons elsewhere.

The latter part of the 16th century was indeed a period of the growth of public resorts for bowling and gambling, in spite of the efforts of the authorities to suppress all kinds of sport, except archery and shooting. There is a letter from the Lord Mayor in 1580 in which he points out that in one part of the City there were two bowling-alleys within one half-acre of ground, and a third applied for, while the proprietor of one of them permitted dicing, carding, table-play, and unlawful betting, and in consequence the place was the resort of

the worst and meanest persons, whilst their families were in peril of starvation.

In the middle ages open spaces of considerable extent were provided by the churchyards, most of which were much larger than the poor remnants which we see to-day. But by the 15th century those economic forces which are now threatening many of our parish churches with destruction were already at work. The growing demand for houses and shops as the population increased caused the inhabitants of many parishes to start building on parts of their churchyards with a view to increasing the church income. This was necessitated by their mounting expenses, due to the great development of church ceremony and music characteristic of the time.

It is curious to note that this increase in parish income and church music had as a secondary effect nothing less than the dawn of popular education. Realisation by rector and parishioners that the finest effects of church music would not be produced without the employment of juvenile voices, coupled with the fact that all church singing was rendered in Latin, compelled each parish to start a schoolroom where a priest or clerk instructed the children in that tongue. A knowledge of Latin was then even more than now the key to the portals of learning. The Reformation, instrumental as it was in destroying so much which was peculiar to the medieval Church, not only spared these schoolrooms, but in many cases helped their development by setting unemployed chantry priests to become whole-time schoolmasters, where previously their religious duties had left them time for only spasmodic efforts at educating the young.

Those churchyards which escaped this kind of encroachment in the 15th century fell victims a hundred

years later when the Reformation, depriving the parish churches of all property which had been given or bequeathed to them for superstitious uses, such as the support of chantries or obits, drove the parishioners to this obvious method of replenishing the church income. This was the case at St. Michael Cornhill, which was fortunate in possessing churchwardens capable of anticipating the seizure of church plate and ornaments by the needy ministers of Edward VI. They forestalled this event by selling large quantities of their valuable possessions, and with the money they built more houses in the churchyard. These were the forerunners of the houses which now stand in front of the church facing Cornhill. At the same period the records of many other parishes furnish similar evidence. Among such we hear of buildings in the churchyards of St. Mary at Hill, St. Nicholas Olave, St. Sepulchre, St. Antholin and St. Mary le Bow.

It is interesting to find that many of the houses so built were the precursors of our modern flats, consisting as they did of four or five stories let out in self-contained chambers. This was a fashion dating in London from the 13th century, but in those early times the flats would be sold rather than let, sometimes leading to awkward situations when one owner kept his flat in good repair while another allowed his to go to rack and ruin. It was not unknown for a flat to remain unrepaired even after a fire, when the plight of the other occupiers may be imagined.

At St. Michael Cornhill the chambers in the churchyard were lettered from A to S, and let at rents ranging from 8s. to 23s. 4d. a year. Moreover, such flats were not occupied only by workmen and the poor,

for it was quite a custom at the time for a tradesman to live in such a chamber while having his shop, warehouse or wharf elsewhere. In 1554 we hear of an Alderman living in one of these chambers and paying a rent of 10s. a year.

This was practically the only kind of house in Old London which was without its garden. Most others, from the mansion of the wealthy merchant to the cottage of the humble toiler, possessed this amenity, and was cultivated with flowers, fruit and vegetables.

Stow tells us of a great house on the west side of Lime Street, which in the 14th century belonged to Simon Burley, a famous protagonist in the quarrels between Richard II and his barons, whose garden reached back to Leadenhall, of which market it afterwards became the Green Yard. At the same period we hear of gardens at Billingsgate and Eastcheap, and of many others much nearer the centre of the City, such as Lothbury, Coleman Street, Lombard Street and Bow Lane.

However, not by any means all the gardens mentioned in the middle ages were attached to houses, for the sylvan beauties of London City were greatly added to by numerous gardens, which were cultivated by working gardeners as market gardens and orchards. Again referring to Stow, "Many parts within the City and liberties were occupied by working gardeners, and were sufficient to furnish the town with garden-ware ; for then but a few herbs were used at the table in comparison to what are spent now." There was a Company of Gardeners incorporated in 1605, but they were in existence long before that. The owners of such gardens took care to see that nothing was done likely to injure their produc-

tivity ; a law existed that the tenant of one on leaving should not remove any vine, bush or tree.

Among the home-grown fruits of the 13th century produced in many a London garden were grapes, apples, pears, cherries, quinces, medlars, peaches, mulberries and gooseberries. Strawberries, raspberries and apricots appear to have been introduced at a rather later period, and oranges were first imported from Spain in the days of Edward I. One of the principal varieties of apple was the " costard," which gave rise to the word " coster," the man who retailed them in the streets. A famous pear was the " Wardon," a baking variety, which originated at the Cistercian monastery of Wardon in Bedfordshire, and was used to make the popular " Wardon pie " of the middle ages. At the same period wine and cider were extensively made in England.

The earliest mention of a fruiterer in London occurs in 1275. His name was John le Long, and his house was next to the church of Allhallows, but which church of that name is not recorded. But by 1304 we find the fruiterers strong enough to form a conspiracy to " corner " fruit. The accusation brought against them concerned their refusal to buy fruit from any garden within London or without until June 24th, " so that they might then have their fruit as it were for nothing." They were at this time a poor and insignificant trade, but the possibility of their taking such action shows that they were not then subject to the competition of non-freemen dealers bringing in fruit from the surrounding country to hawk round the streets of London.

Such competition, affecting not only fruiterers, but all other retail traders, developed rapidly in the 14th century, and became worse in the 15th, when we find each trade

coming in turn to the Guildhall to petition the Mayor to make rules restricting the activities of strangers who retailed goods in the City without becoming freemen. It was the turn of the Fruiterers in 1463, who stated that they gave great pleasure to the King, lords and many of lesser degree by supplying them with fruit, both home-grown and imported, and also to their simple power contributed to the charges and honour of the City. Nevertheless, in recent times foreigners had been allowed to sell all manner of fruit in all parts of the City at their own will and pleasure, not restricting themselves either to the proper market-places or market-days. This redounds, as the petition states, "to the comon deceipt and hurt of the said Citee and to the disclaundre and impoverissyng of your saide besechors"; but that they were thinking more of their own hurt than that of the "Citee" may be understood by the admission that the foreigners "standen and goon to selle them (the fruit) more liberaly than any freman."

For these causes the strangers were restricted to the open markets in Cheapside and Cornhill on three days a week only, the freemen having the sole right of selling fruit in shops and hawking it through the streets. This arrangement did not prove as successful as the Fruiterers anticipated, for in 1486 they came again and asked to be allowed to stand among the foreigners in the market-places as freely as they used to do.

The church of St. Martin Pomery in Ironmonger Lane, Cheapside, is supposed to have been so named from an apple orchard existing there. Stow had seen large void spaces in the lane which he assumed to have been formerly so used. A more authentic example of a London orchard is found in 1348, when a tenement

near the church of Allhallows in London Wall was let for 24s. a year and half the fruit growing in the garden.

Tower Hill appears to have been from early times a place of market gardens, many of which were Corporation property. In 1375 we hear of one near the wall of the City lying between two other gardens, let by the Corporation at a rent of 10s. a year, and another in 1352 near the Crutched Friars let for the same rent. In 1372 the Corporation, at the instance of the King, took action against the gardeners of Tower Hill on account of the refuse they allowed to accumulate there.

Not far away, near the Minories, was a dairy farm. Stow, describing the spot, says : "Near adjoining to this abbey (the Minoresses or nuns of St. Clare), on the south side thereof, was sometime a farm belonging to the said nunnery ; at the which farm I myself in my youth have fetched many a halfpenny worth of milk, and never had less than three ale pints for a halfpenny in the summer, nor less than one ale quart for a halfpenny in the winter, always hot from the kine, as the same was milked and strained."

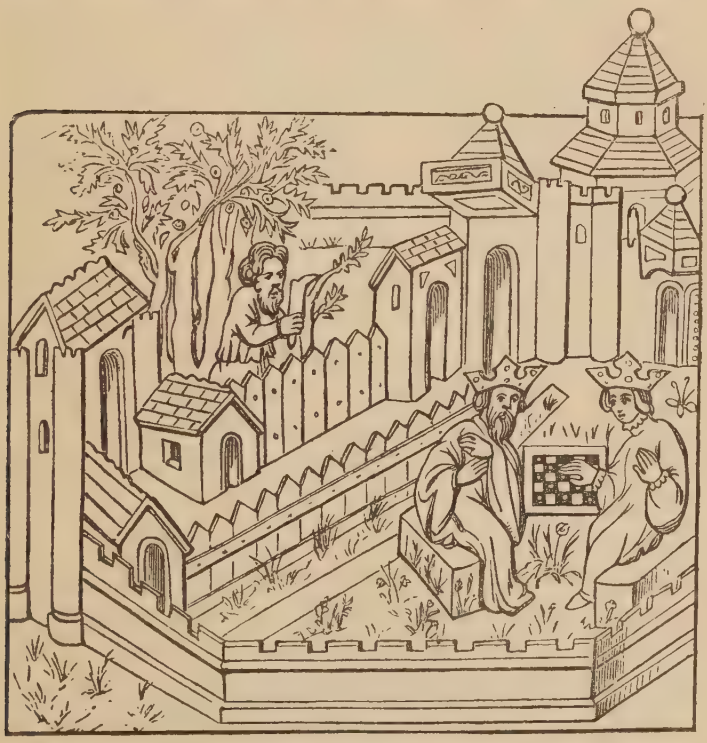
In the 15th century several of the gardens at Tower Hill, with more at Aldgate, belonged to the church of St. Mary at Hill. They were let at rents ranging from 2s. 8d. to 13s. 4d. a year, mostly to men (and one woman) described in the churchwardens' accounts as gardeners. On several occasions they are found paying a labourer fourpence a day to erect palings round them. These palings cost 3s. a hundred. In 1493 they paid thirteenpence for hedging a garden at Tower Hill and erecting poles, and in the following year they bought a load of thorns to hedge another garden.

Departed, indeed, are the glories of Old London.

Gone are the trim hedges, the sweet-smelling herb gardens, the fruit trees loaded with their weight of blossom in the spring, and without the walls the farms and hayfields, all sacrificed to the Moloch of modern progress. We must therefore be the more grateful for those few small green spaces which are left to remind us of an aspect of City life which has passed away never to return. Most of these are, of course, the remains of old churchyards, but not all, for there are still to be found the remains of a few, a very few, ancient gardens, sadly diminished in size, it is true, but still existing on the ancient spots, and perhaps it may not be devoid of interest to the lover of Old London if this chapter ends with a brief mention of where some of them may be found.

Through a gateway in Princes Street, opposite the Bank of England, can still be seen the remains of Grocers' Hall Gardens, sadly diminished from their ancient splendour, first for the enlargement of the hall and afterwards for the widening of Princes Street, but always maintained with a wealth of flowers. A remnant of Drapers' Gardens still exists behind their hall in Throgmorton Street, with tall trees and green lawn, but these appear to be the only vestiges of the once famous gardens of the company halls, if we except the solitary tree in front of Stationers' Hall off Ludgate Hill. A reminder of the gardens attached in ancient times to the houses of the great merchants may be seen in New Court, St. Swithin's Lane, where a forecourt laid out in flower-beds lends a charming note of colour to that street of opulent trading companies, while in another New Court, in Bow Lane, is a garden in front of an old-fashioned residential hotel where flower-beds can still be traced,

though devoid of flowers, a vine hangs its green leaves against the wall, and the guests recline in a garden seat to take the air. Just without the ancient walls of the City are, of course, a whole string of gardens from the west to the north-east—Temple Gardens, Charterhouse Square, Bridgewater Square, Finsbury Square and Finsbury Circus, but of those within the walls the finest of all is Amen Court in Warwick Lane, though hidden from the gaze of the rambling Londoner by its high brick wall. Probably the garden of St. Andrew's House, on St. Andrew's Hill, in Queen Victoria Street, would run it a good second if one could but get a view of it from the narrow court which passes several feet below it.



A MEDIEVAL GARDEN

CHAPTER XIV

LONDON'S CARFAX

OXFORD University, with that gift of tongues for which it is justly celebrated, has succeeded in extracting an adventitious glamour from ordinary things by a judicious manipulation of names. Thus, by suppressing the common word "street," we arrive at those romantic names, "The High," "The Broad." Another local expression—Carfax—has achieved such a world-wide reputation that its mention anywhere immediately suggests Oxford. But how many are aware that in times gone by London also possessed its Carfax, or, to be more exact, its Carfeux, for they are the same thing ; but the citizens, with a lack of appreciation of the picturesque, engendered probably by their businesslike lives, foolishly allowed it to lapse.

The word Carfeux, or Carfukes, comes from the Old French, and means four forks or the meeting of four ways. London's Carfeux was the cross-roads where Cornhill, Leadenhall Street, Gracechurch Street and Bishopsgate Street meet. It is true that mention of the word is only found a few times in the records, and then only during the 14th century, but this is sufficient to establish its popular use in early times.

There is little doubt that in the early period of the Roman occupation the Carfeux was the centre of the City. Here was the highest point in London, and recent excavations have revealed thick masses of masonry running across Gracechurch Street, which suggests that

it was the citadel of early Roman London. This would account for the first Christian church of the metropolis —St. Peter's—being established here, tradition says as early as A.D. 199.

Coming to medieval times, in accordance with the persistent habit of the citizens of conducting their buying and selling in the open street rather than in their shops, such a golden opportunity of establishing yet another market at the Carfeux was not to be neglected. So from early times a poultry market grew up here which has never been discontinued ; in later ages it resolved itself into Leadenhall Market.

It was the settled policy of the rulers of the City to prevent the citizens from mixing with members of the same trade from outside the City, not so much on account of the dignity appertaining to the freedom, as because it was thought that by collusion between the two classes —freemen and non-freemen—the price of commodities might be raised. At first the citizen poulterers and the " foreigners " stood all together at the Carfax, but in 1357 the freemen were ordered by proclamation to come no nearer than the farther side of St. Michael's Church, an ordinance repeated in 1375.

There seems to be some confusion as to whether at this time the " foreign " poulterers actually stood at the cross-roads or in the Leadenhall, for in alternate proclamations they are ordered first to one place and then to the other. It may be that this difficulty can be explained by Stow's contention that one reason for the founding of the market at Leadenhall was that the strangers should be able to sell their wares under cover in wet weather. Up to the hour of prime they were allowed to sell poultry only to private citizens, but after that they might

dispose of the remainder to cooks and hawkers, but not to the freemen poulterers.

On the north-east corner of the Carfax, where is now the London and Lancashire Insurance Office, there came to light in 1766, as the result of a fire, the remains of an ancient church, or rather what appeared to be the crypt of a church, half submerged in the ground, and showing two aisles, one wide and one narrow. No mention whatever of such a structure is to be found in the City records, and the supposition that it might be the original St. Peter's, built in Roman times and destroyed at the Saxon invasion, is negatived by its Gothic style of construction. Neither is there any record of the church of St. Peter having been removed to its present position in medieval times, as happened to St. Stephen Walbrook, recorded in a previous chapter. A few feet north of it along Bishopsgate Street was the remains of what appeared to be a charnel-house, with chapel above similar to those existing beside most ancient London churches. This discovery remains one of the most puzzling mysteries ofOld London.

On the north-west corner of the Carfax, opposite the church of St. Peter on Cornhill, stood in the middle ages the great south gate with rooms above of an estate extending north across Threadneedle Street to Broad Street, at which end was its great north gate. Its eastern edge did not reach quite to Bishopsgate Street, fronting which from Cornhill to Threadneedle Street was a row of houses, one of which belonged to the rector of St. Bride's Church in Fleet Street. In 1331 the estate belonged to Edmund Crepin, which " principal dwelling-house " he sold to John de Yakesley, the King's tent-maker, at which time it was occupied by Sir Oliver de

Ingham, Crepin's tenant. In 1356 Yakesley left it to his wife for life, with remainder to Thomas de Cauntebrigge, a carpenter. Sometime before 1406 it came into the possession of the Company of Merchant Tailors, in which year additional ground adjoining it came to them from the family of Oteswich, the builders of the church of St. Martin Oteswich, formerly standing on the corner of Threadneedle Street. At that time Merchant Tailors' Hall already stood upon the ground in its present position, with a garden between its rear and Cornhill, and on the newly acquired ground they built a row of almshouses fronting Threadneedle Street between their hall and the church of St. Martin on the corner. In 1342 we find Thomas Sutton, a tailor, leaving lands and tenements at Garlickhithe for the support of these almshouses. The great south gate on Cornhill is probably represented by White Lion Court, a little turning opposite St. Peter's Church.

Just in front of St. Peter's Church, in the middle of the road, there was erected late in the 14th century a water standard. In 1378 the executors of Adam Fraunceys, a former Mayor, promised 500 marks towards carrying water from the Great Conduit in Chepe to this spot, and thereupon the Common Council appointed a committee to consider how best it might be done. The standard therefore dates from shortly after that time. In 1582 it was supplied with water from the engine at London Bridge, erected by Peter Morice the Dutchman, by which Thames water was carried as far as this point. The standard so continued until 1674, when it was finally removed.

Documentary evidence of the early belief in the great antiquity of St. Peter's is found as early as A.D. 700.

The legend runs that it was built in A.D. 199 by the British King Lucius to be the metropolitan church of England, and that it so remained until the Saxon invasion. In Stow's time a tablet was kept in the church inscribed with a list of the archbishops who there held their see from its foundation. Its earliest mention in the City records is in 1283, when 1s. a year was paid towards its lights out of the rent of a house in Gracechurch Street. True it is that throughout the middle ages the story of its early foundation was implicitly believed, and it was regarded as the doyen of City churches.

From St. Peter's started one of the greatest festivals of the year—the march of the Fishmongers to St. Paul's on Whit-Monday, accompanied by the Mayor and Aldermen and the rectors of all the City churches. On account of the sanctity in which St. Peter's was held, its rector on these occasions occupied the place of honour, but the Fishmongers, who were settled in two places in the City—Bridge Street and Old Fish Street—made great efforts for many years to oust him from his foremost or rather hindmost position, for that was the place of honour, in favour of the rectors of their own local churches, St. Magnus and St. Nicholas Coleabbey. In 1417 the Mayor, in deciding this question in favour of St. Peter's and warning the Fishmongers to desist from their agitation, described the rectors of St. Peter's as "priors, or rather abbots, over all the rectors in the City."

Several descriptions of this procession in Mary's reign, when for a few years it was revived after its suppression at the Reformation, have been left by Machyn the diarist. On the morning of Whit-Monday

all the participants assembled at St. Peter's to hear High Mass, after which the procession was formed with a choir of clerks marching in front, followed by a hundred priests in cloth of gold, the parishioners carrying white rods, the Company of Fishmongers, and last of all the Mayor and Aldermen dressed in scarlet. In the 14th century we find the last-named dressing in green taffeta for the occasion. After marching to St. Paul's and offering at the high altar they returned to dinner at Fishmongers' Hall.

In the 15th century the object offered at the high altar of St. Paul's was an ornamental rod surmounted by a red rose, which was carried before the Mayor in the procession. This was presented to the Mayor on the morning of Whit-Monday at St. Peter's by Sir William Eastfield as the price of a licence granted him in 1429 to build a "halpace," or extension between his house and the Guildhall for use as a chapel. On the same occasion another red rose was presented to the Mayor by way of rent of a piece of ground at Smithfield in accordance with a lease granted by the Corporation in 1445.

An interesting phase of the religious life of medieval London is opened up by the record of an anchorite living in the church of St. Peter on Cornhill in 1345. Such anchorites were often chantry priests, who had made a vow never during life to leave the building where they officiated. They would often have a cell built communicating with the chantry chapel, and in this circumscribed space their entire day and night was spent. Such men were regarded as very holy and wise, and the citizens were fond of consulting them in cases of doubt or difficulty, for which purpose a small window

or grated opening would be made in the cell wall communicating with the churchyard.

There was a distinction drawn between an anchorite and a hermit. The former was vowed to a solitary life in his "ankerhold," but the latter could go out and mix with his fellow-creatures, and, indeed, often followed some trade or occupation, returning to his cell when the day's work was done. In the records the terms are rather loosely applied, as may be seen in the 15th century, when one William Lucas, who describes himself as "ancre recluse" of the church of Allhallows, London Wall, nevertheless so far meddled with the affairs of the outside world as to handle the moneys of the church, and also to rear a boy, teach him reading, writing and arithmetic, and afterwards apprentice him to a tailor.

Many charitable citizens bequeathed sums of money to these anchorites, anchoresses and hermits. In this connection we hear of anchorites in the churches of St. Benet Fink, St. Lawrence Jewry, and St. Botolph, Bishopsgate. Others were unconnected with churches, and these appear to be always hermitages rather than ankerholds. Such were the "Swan's Nest" on London Wall, near the Tower, and others on the wall at Aldgate and Bishopsgate. This last was granted in 1322 by the Mayor and Aldermen to one Stephen le Roo for life, provided he lived as became a hermit, otherwise he would be expelled. There was a hermitage at Smithfield next to the chapel of Bartholomew's Hospital dating from the 13th century, and occupied, at any rate at first, by a lady. Stow relates that Henry III granted 20 feet of land in length and breadth for this purpose to Katharine Hardell, a widow.

There were houses between the churches of St. Peter

and St. Michael from very early times. In 1320 we hear not only of some already existing, but also of new ones then erected with stabling for four horses. Entries in the churchwardens' accounts of St. Michael's concerning the same spot in the late 16th century afford an illustration of the way in which the streets were thronged with small dealers of one kind and another, taking their stand at any convenient pitch. One woman had a stand outside the church where she sold old clothes, and another, Mary Brayfield, dealing in "bands and sempstry," was allowed to hang her stock-in-trade on the vestry wall in Cornhill on payment of 10s. a year to the church.

Leadenhall, although from early times apparently used, at any rate partly, as a market-place, was never in any sense an open or street market, but was always covered in as we see it to-day. It still retains the aspect of a hall, and a hall it was from its earliest existence, covered with a roof of lead at a time when most residences were thatched or tiled. From this circumstance it is often called in early records "sale de plom." When it is first met with in the records, in 1296, it was a private mansion, the home of the Nevills. In those times any great house was called a "Hall," because the principal chamber was the great hall where the owner and his retainers passed the greater part of the day, and where they had their meals, and most of them slept, the smaller rooms clustering round it being merely additions to this main chamber.

Leadenhall first came into the actual possession of the City in 1411, when it was made over to them by Richard Whittington and others for the purpose of making it a public granary where corn could be stored against times

of scarcity. But long before that the citizens had possessed some sort of interest in it, probably by leasing it, or parts of it, from the owners. As early as 1301 the Mayor and other justices held a court there, adjourned from the Guildhall, to decide a case of trespass between John the Chaucer, Elias Russel, John of Guilford, and others, in which they awarded £1,000 damages to the first named. Again, in 1326, the armed citizens assembled there in support of Prince Edward against his father, Edward II, when they met the Constable of the Tower and negotiated for the release of his prisoners.

In early times Leadenhall was more nearly on the corner of Gracechurch Street than it is to-day, or, at any rate, it appeared to be so, because where are now houses in front of it was then a garden. It was at that time a market for a few commodities only—poultry, eggs, butter and cheese ; the others only came there after its acquisition by the City.

It is not often realised to what a great extent poultry was raised in the City itself in the middle ages, and under this heading were included not only chickens and geese, but also swans and herons. This seems to have been the chief source of the stock-in-trade of the freemen poulterers, who were not allowed to buy poultry from the strangers who brought it in, or to go outside the City to buy it. This live poultry they kept not only in their houses and gardens but in the streets where their markets were held, such as the Poultry and St. Nicholas Shambles in Newgate Street. Such a condition of things was but one more of the amenities of street life at the time, and its effect may be judged from the words of a petition addressed to the Common Council in 1444, in which the complainants say, " the ordure and standyng

of them is of grete stenche and so evil savour that it causeth grete and parlous infectyng of the people."

The poulterers also dealt in eggs, which it is interesting to find were sold by the "long hundred" of 120 in 1300, as they are to-day. A proclamation of that year fixing the price of victuals says, "a hundred of eggs, at one hundred and twenty, for eightpence." In 1370 the price was ten a penny, but at a time of exceptional scarcity, as in 1595, they could rise as high as three for twopence.

In 1377 the "foreign" cheesemongers, who had been in the habit of hawking cheese and butter round the streets, were ordered to bring them to Leadenhall and St. Nicholas Shambles and there sell them in open market. This foreign cheese came mostly from Stratford, Hackney and Ham, but some of it, known as "talgar," from as far away as Wales. We learn that in the 15th century an Essex cheese weighed three hundredweight and a Suffolk cheese 256 pounds, but that small cheese were also available is shown by the accounts of St. Mary at Hill, in which the churchwardens are shown in 1491 buying two cheese for 1s. 6d., and in 1539 one for eightpence. In 1560 the price of cheese was a penny farthing a pound.

Butter in early times was sold by measure in a semi-liquid condition. A regulation of 1379 decrees that it shall be sold for three-halfpence the "esquielle," or dish holding a pint. By the 15th century it was sold by weight at eight ounces for a halfpenny in summer, and six ounces for a halfpenny in winter. By the end of the 16th century it had risen to threepence a pound, which in time of scarcity might be increased to as much as sevenpence.

After the acquisition of Leadenhall by the City in 1411 it gained rapidly in importance by reason of the increased uses continually found for it. In an effort to stabilise to some extent the price of corn a public granary was erected in 1446, most probably on the site of the original building, for two years previously the widow of John Carpenter, the famous Town Clerk, the lessee of Leadenhall garden, granted the City a right of way to it across her property. That the new building was oblong in shape, with its long axis north and south, is shown by a record of 1477 that two houses were built on its north and south sides respectively, and four houses on its east and west sides.

In 1463 a great impetus was given to the prosperity of Leadenhall by the transference there of the staple of Westminster, otherwise the London wool market. This is contained in a charter granted by Edward IV to the City, which states that the " tronage and weighing, and measuring, laying-up and placing " of wool shall be held at Leadenhall only, and that all fees and profits arising therefrom shall henceforth become the property of the citizens. By the following century the wool market was well established, and from the pages of Stow an impression can be gathered of the busy scene in the hall where the great beam was erected for the weighing of the bales of wool, and in another part the scales for weighing corn, while in yet other parts were stored the wool sacks and the materials for the pageants. Meanwhile, in the lofts above the hall woolmen worked at winding and packing wool and painters at making and painting the images and other decorations for use in the public shows.

From a petition addressed to the Mayor about 1500

it can be seen that Leadenhall was then the principal market for leather, wool, canvas, linen, yarn, nails and lead. In 1482, on account of abuses in the manufacture of cloth, it was ordered by the Common Council that no fuller should keep a tenter in his house for stretching cloth, that all such implements in private hands should be destroyed, and that in future no more than ten should be kept in the City—five at Fullers' Hall and five at Leadenhall. The reason for this was that the cloth-workers used to wet the cloth and stretch it to inordinate dimensions, with the result that when exposed to rain it would shrink back to its original size.

Stow tells us that by 1522 the "rippers of Rie" and other places sold their fish at Leadenhall, but it was not until the year 1533 that the "foreign" butchers were installed there. Prior to that date they had stood in Lime Street every Wednesday and Saturday, and were some gain to the tenants before whose doors they stood, and into whose houses they set their blocks and stalls. They were compelled to remove to Leadenhall so that the rent of their stalls should contribute to the revenue of the market.

By a law passed in the same year (1533) meat was for the first time sold by weight, and Stow's account of the new regulation is worth quoting as showing that such efforts did not always turn out to the advantage of those they were designed to benefit. "It was this year enacted that butchers should sell their beef and mutton by weight, beef for a halfpenny the pound and mutton for three farthings: which being devised for the great commodity of the realm (as it was thought), hath proved far otherwise, for at that time fat oxen were sold for six and twenty shillings and eightpence the piece, fat

wethers for 3 shillings and 4 pence the piece, fat calves for the like price, a fat lamb for twelve pence. The butchers of London sold penny pieces of beef for the relief of the poor, every piece two pound and a half, sometimes three pound for a penny : and 13, sometimes 14, of these pieces for twelve pence : mutton 8 pence the quarter, and an hundred weight of beef for 4 shillings and 8 pence : what price it hath grown to since it needeth not to set down." [1]

Stow's estimate of the result of this measure turned out but too correct, for in the succeeding years a steady rise in the price of meat is to be observed. In 1545 it was ordered by the Common Council that beef should be sold for three farthings a pound from Christmas to Midsummer, and three and a half farthings for the rest of the year, and mutton a penny a pound all the year round ; but in spite of this, by 1552 the best cuts of beef and mutton had risen to a penny farthing a pound, while only the necks and legs remained at three farthings.

At this time there were four porters attached to the market. The office was at the disposal of the Mayor, and was of sufficient importance for Sir Thomas Lake to write to the Mayor interceding for an applicant. There were also the offices of Keeper of the Market and Yeoman of the Meat Market.

Leadenhall at this period and earlier was also a storehouse for the public property of the City. Besides the " properties " for the pageants already alluded to, they kept here the artillery and other equipment of the armed forces of the City, and the timber used for the repair of houses belonging to the Corporation. It is recorded that these stores were entirely consumed in a fire which

[1] *Annals*, ed. 1631, p. 568.

destroyed Leadenhall in 1483. Another use to which the market was put at the same period was the distribution of those charitable doles given indiscriminately to all applicants which constituted such a frequent form of posthumous piety in the middle ages. On one such occasion in 1601, when on the death of Lady Mary Ramsey, the widow of a former Mayor, a charitable dole was dealt out on her behalf to all the poor of London at Leadenhall, so great was the crowd that seventeen people were crushed to death. Another queer use of the market is that recorded in 1653, when banns of marriage were published there on three several market days in three several weeks.

Leadenhall continued as one of the principal City markets for many kinds of goods, but especially meat, until it was once more destroyed in the fire of 1666. Mr. Pepys relates how in 1663 he bought a very good leg of beef there for sixpence, and by candlelight too. In 1668 he saw a woman steal a shoulder of mutton from a butcher's stall in the market, when the woman who caught her was so silly as to let her go, being satisfied with the recovery of the meat.

After the Great Fire it was rebuilt in fine style of freestone, and the meat market was placed at the south-east corner of the Carfax, with the fish market at the east end of Leadenhall. So it remained until 1880, when the old buildings were taken down and the present market built. But many years before this time the old word Carfeux had become obsolete, and already in 1600 the spot had acquired the name of Leadenhall Corner.

CHAPTER XV

THE MANSION HOUSE

IN every great city there is some favoured spot which, despite the chances and changes of hundreds of years, begins and remains the hub of town life. Such a one is the Mansion House in London and the space in front of it, which, although both its appearance and its purpose have undergone a radical change since the 13th century, is still the busiest spot in the City, from where the streets radiate in every direction, where the congestion of the crossing streams of traffic is always greatest, and around which have grown up the Lord Mayor's official residence, the Royal Exchange, and the greatest of the banks. In the 13th century it teemed with life and movement as it does to-day, but with a difference. Where now we see the crowds of motors of all descriptions saved from inextricable confusion by the directing hands of the police, then the traffic was on foot, clustering round the market stalls, where bargaining proceeded from sunrise to sunset ; where the shouts of the porters as they slung the bales of wool and other merchandise on to the great scales known as the King's Beam mingled with the cries of the butchers and fishmongers recommending their wares, and the only traffic that went by power other than human were the lumbering springless carts which dragged the bales of rich merchandise to the docks or the City gates, or an occasional horseman who picked his way warily around the crowded market-place.

Curiously enough, we shall find as we proceed that the history of this spot illustrates quite an extraordinary number of the more curious among the circumstances of life in medieval London, but whether in most instances this was due to its central position, or was merely fortuitous, it would be hard to say.

In the year 1282 Edward I gave to the citizens a waste piece of ground to the north of the church of St. Mary Woolchurch Haw, now the site of the Mansion House, for the purpose of building upon in order to raise funds for the support of London Bridge, which was then in a ruinous condition. In the following year the Mayor, Henry le Galeys, proceeded to build a covered-in market-place for retail butchers and fishmongers, and called it the Stocks Market, in memory of a pair of stocks which had formerly stood there. Besides the market-place proper, he also built two or three dwellings, one of which, on the west side of the market, was rented for 30s. a year by John Lovekyn, a fishmonger, and several times Mayor, to whom the famous Sir William Walworth was apprenticed.

In the 15th century the Stocks Market contained fifty-eight stalls, each consisting of a board measuring 4½ feet to 5 feet in length, mounted on legs. They were occupied on flesh days by the butchers and on fish days by the fishmongers, and because fish days, although numerous, were somewhat less so than flesh days, the butchers paid fourpence a week and the fishmongers threepence. Each trade, on days when its rivals occupied the market proper, was accommodated outside on twenty-seven stalls, which were set up under the penthouses, or projecting eaves of the roof.

At first a law was made that no butcher or fishmonger

should carry on business anywhere else than at the Stocks Market, with the exception of a few old and recognised markets, the shops over which they lived becoming mere storehouses for their stock-in-trade. This rule was observed for a time, but by 1324 the Wardens of London Bridge, whose revenue depended to so large an extent upon the market, had to complain of butchers and fishmongers erecting their stalls in the neighbouring streets in order to avoid payment of the rent.

The above-mentioned tradesmen, however, were not the only ones possessing stalls and doing business at the Stocks Market. In 1380 it was ordered by the Corporation that all cloth made outside the City should be sold at two places only—the Stocks and the Guildhall —and that each piece before sale should be sealed with a leaden seal by a serjeant of the Chamber of London. Another trade established at the Stocks Market was the Tallow Chandlers, and their presence there is accounted for by the fact that they bought tallow from the butchers and made it into candles. The butchers were not allowed to sell it to anyone but the chandlers, and at prices fixed by the authorities. It was sold by the butchers in two forms—Roughtallow and "Molte-talaugh," or melted tallow—and when made up into candles was not permitted to be sold to the public at more than twopence a pound.

In 1461 there was trouble between the tallow chandlers and the butchers, the former accusing the latter of melting down their tallow and selling it to other butchers until it became concentrated in the hands of a few, who would then send it outside the City for sale, either in bulk or in the form of candles, thus depriving the tallow

NONSUCH HOUSE ON LONDON BRIDGE

THE VINTRY

chandlers of a living and the citizens of candles. It is interesting to find that this method of dealing by the butchers is stigmatised by the chandlers as " engrossing " the tallow, thus showing how the Grocers first obtained their name, which means no more than wholesale dealers. In view of this complaint an ordinance was made by the Mayor and Aldermen that no butcher should sell tallow to another butcher, but only to the chandlers, that no tallow should be sent out of the City until the demands of the citizens had been met, and that a tallow candle should consist of nothing but tallow and cotton.

Hard by the Stocks Market was another sort of market held in the churchyard of St. Mary Woolchurch Haw, the site of which church and churchyard is now occupied by the Mansion House. " Haw " is the Old English word for yard, and so we have " bothaw " for boatyard, and several " woodhaws " for wood-yards in the City. In the same way a church haw was a churchyard, but the syllable was always tacked on to the name of St. Mary Woolchurch because its haw was a place of considerable importance in the economy of Old London. In it was erected the King's Beam for weighing the bales of wool as they were brought up the Walbrook on the barges and landed at the wharves in Bucklersbury.

When the church of St. Mary Woolchurch Haw was rebuilt in 1442 a stipulation was made by the authorities that the wall of the church should be not less than 15 feet from the Stocks Market, so as not to obstruct the light, and for this they received compensation from the Wardens of London Bridge, who, as we have seen, were the owners of the market. From this transaction

it might well be argued that the wall of the early church was nearer to the market than 15 feet, with the necessary consequence that the churchyard where the wool was weighed must have been on some other side of the church, were it not for an entry in the Letter-Book of the year 1325, which explicitly states that the Stocks Market was "adjacent to the wall of the churchyard of the church of Woolchurch Haw." From this entry it would appear that the churchyard was north of the church, and that the weighing of wool proceeded on ground separated by no more than the churchyard wall from the Stocks Market.

In the middle ages it was nothing unusual for the churchyards to be used for many other purposes besides those of burial. Markets, fairs and meetings were carried on in such convenient open spaces, and often sports were held in them. Until the year 1544 Bartholomew Fair was held in the churchyard of St. Bartholomew's at the same time that the parishioners were buried there.

In transactions between strangers and citizens the weighing of all manner of merchandise at the King's Beam was obligatory, and the authorities took care to enforce the law by every means in their power. In 1269 about twenty "foreign" or non-citizen merchants were imprisoned for refusing to have their goods weighed at the King's Beam, and their own balances and weights were taken into Cheapside and burned and smashed with hammers.

When dealing among themselves citizens were not compelled to use the King's Beam, but in such cases it was stipulated that their balances should agree with the Standard of the Exchequer, should be sealed with the

seal of the Guildhall, and that the tongue of the balance should incline neither to one side nor the other, and should not be touched by hand or foot.

Any attempt to interfere with this liberty was regarded as a very serious offence, as may be seen from an instance in 1293, when William of Woolchurch Haw, an official who has been mentioned in an earlier chapter, was prosecuted for setting up a beam or tron of his own at Bartholomew Fair and attempting to compel the citizens to use it, "to the prejudice of the freedom of the City to the extent of £1,000." In order to effect his object he seized by force the citizens' own weighing machines which they had brought with them. In the end he escaped with a fine of £5, and was ordered to amend his conduct in future.

Perhaps abuses of this kind on the part of officials were more prevalent at the time than the meagreness of the records would lead us to suppose, and in consequence were regarded with a somewhat indulgent eye, because, notwithstanding such lapses from the straight path, the name of William of Woolchurch Haw stands high in the records of the time, but not, it must be confessed, among the highest. On many occasions we find him coming to Guildhall to stand security for others, and in 1299 as one of the pledges of Henry de Fingrie, the Sheriff for that year. In 1298 he lent the City 40s. towards paying a fine to the King, and having left at his death money for pious purposes, his executors in 1304 gave £19 towards the repair of the pavement within Bishopsgate for the good of his soul. Unhappily, the tale of malversation still goes on, for this sum having been paid to the Mayor, John le Blund, for the purpose mentioned, the Corporation found it necessary

ten years later to sue the heirs and executors of le Blund for the money.

Stow tells us that the King's Beam for the weighing of wool remained at Woolchurch Haw until 1383, when it was transferred to Woolwharf, on the site of the present Custom House in Lower Thames Street, built at that time for the purpose by John Churchman, Alderman of Bishopsgate Ward. This, however, can scarcely be a correct statement of the case, for Woolwharf is mentioned in the Coroners' Rolls as early as 1325, and in the following year it appears in the wills preserved in the Court of Husting. In 1344 one John Vincent, deceased, is described as late weigher at "le Wollewharf," and in 1345 a merchant sued the Sheriffs for detaining twenty "sarplars" of his wool at Woolwharf. These entries show that wool was both landed and weighed there long before 1383.

The fact is, of course, that there were several King's Beams in the City. In 1285 it was ordered that beams for the weighing of all goods above twenty-five pounds in weight should be set up in a number of places in London. Among these were Woolchurch Haw and the Steelyard, the headquarters of the Hanseatic League, on the site of the present Cannon Street Station. It is not certain if Woolwharf was one of them at such an early date, but in the succeeding years many entries in the records show beams in various parts of the City. In 1392 one was kept at a house called La Herber at the lower end of Walbrook, and it is obvious that wool was weighed at many of them from an order received from the King in 1340 that all weighers of wool were to appear before him at Westminster.

The beams were not only stationed at recognised spots,

but as early as 1296 were carried round by the weighers to the houses of merchants where their services were required. For this service the Sheriffs charged a toll of a halfpenny for any weight below ten hundredweight, a penny between ten and eleven hundredweight, and three-halfpence between eleven hundredweight and a ton. This practice, however, appears always to have been regarded as irregular.

In 1307 we find the weigher at the beam elected by the Woolmen of London. This was probably for the Great Beam at Woolchurch Haw, and the successful candidate had to swear that he would "good lawful and indifferent weight depart to all persons that come to the said beam to weigh." Towards the end of the 14th century a Great Beam was in the custody of the Company of Grocers, who kept it at one time in a house in Bucklersbury known as the Cornet's Tower, and at another time at the Weigh House in Cornhill. In 1376 they are found electing the weigher.

In later times the weighing of wool appears to have been restricted to one beam and the appointment of the weigher to have become a prerogative of the King. In 1463 Edward IV granted a charter to the City by which the staple of wool was transferred from Westminster to Leadenhall, and no wool was to be stored or dealt in anywhere else within three miles of the City. Some time after this the Great Beam appears once more to have come into the hands of the King, with the appointment of its custodian, but all rights in it were again restored to the citizens by Henry VIII.

Throughout the middle ages a custom was levied on exported wool for the benefit of the King, and more particularly for the carrying on of his wars. This

custom was always a certain sum per sack of wool, the amount varying according to the necessities of the time. But the term "sack" as applied to wool meant not a package, but a definite weight—26 stone of 14 pounds each, or 364 pounds: twelve such sacks made a last. The actual package containing the wool was called a "sarplar," and could contain almost any weight. In 1435 there is mention of sarplars of wool containing two and a half sacks each, at which time it appears to have been the regular size of the sarplar, but by the 17th century a sarplar had increased to three sacks.

The toll levied by the Sheriffs for weighing at Woolchurch Haw was a halfpenny for a sack of wool, a hundred woolfels, or a hundred pounds of woollen yarn. In 1313 the Grocers, Drapers and Woolmen complained that not only was the beam defective, but the man in charge of it was incapacitated for his work by failing eyesight. Thereupon the Mayor caused it to be tested by an "aunseremakere," or scale-maker, and gave the merchants leave to elect another weigher. Two years later a new beam was made, and we find the statement that it was used for weighing cheese, butter and tallow, as well as wool. In 1326 there was some fear that the King would take the beam away from Woolchurch Haw and install it in the Temple, for there is a letter from the Mayor begging him not to do this on account of the difficulty of bringing wool so far up the river, especially in times of frost.

It is uncertain at what time the weighing of wool was started at Woolchurch Haw, but it was probably a churchyard at the time, for the church was built in the early part of William the Conqueror's reign by the Lord of the Manor of Walbrook, whose stone house stood next

door to it. It was known at first as St. Mary Newcherche, and was the property of the monastery of St. John in Colchester, in whose possession it remained until the Reformation. It was among the City churches not rebuilt after the Great Fire of 1666, the ground on which it stood being utilised for increasing the area of the Stocks Market, which thereafter covered a space of 230 feet by 108 feet.

Before that time, however, the records of the Church yield many interesting examples of the customs of Old London and the habits of its citizens. One of these comes from the year 1305, and concerns the ancient and laudable custom of appointing a "love-day" for the settlement of differences between warring factions, which, however, was not always crowned with the success it deserved. A dispute having arisen between a smith and his servant, a peace-making carpenter persuaded several people to meet at St. Mary's for the purpose of composing the differences of the disputants. It is regrettable to find that the smith so far failed to appreciate the carpenter's efforts that, arriving on the scene with a band of followers armed with swords and bucklers, he pulled the peacemaker's nose, tried to drag him out of the church, and threatened to kill him. When the carpenter charged him with assault, the jury, with no more idealism than the smith, brought in a verdict that the would-be peacemaker had not received damage to the value of fourpence, which was equivalent to nonsuiting him.

A study of the wills of some of the parishioners of St. Mary Woolchurch Haw will yield further evidence of the curious habits and customs of Londoners in the middle ages. Among such it is interesting to find that

the practice of " remembering one's friends " had already come into vogue, but in some instances involved articles that are not likely to be found mentioned in modern wills. Thus in 1361 one William Walman left to one friend a pair of hose, to another a brass pot, a pan, a feather bed, two gowns and 40s. ; and to a third a tunic and hood, and a body-protecting vest known as a " wardcorps." Another parishioner, a saddler buried in the churchyard, left to a chaplain a silver-mounted dagger, his best silk girdle, his best carving-knife, and two silver spoons in a case. A brewer, buried in the church in 1578, illustrates the antiquity of the " righteous minds of innkeepers," that profound truth discovered by Mr. Chesterton, by leaving a barrel of beer to each of his customers.

Such curious bequests were not, of course, confined to the parish of St. Mary Woolchurch Haw, and some concerning residents in other parts of the City are sufficiently amusing to be worth recording. Thus in 1373 another brewer left forty shillings' worth of ale to Geoffrey the Taverner at the Bull in Chepe, to which extent he admitted having formerly defrauded him. Other bequests of drink are recorded in 1368, when a goldsmith left a pipe of wine to several friends to drink among themselves, and another citizen left 20s. for the purpose of bringing the neighbours together to drink to his memory. In other instances toothsome dainties of another kind were bequeathed, as in 1397, when one John Northampton, a draper, left a yearly gift of half a pound of ginger to every monk in the Charterhouse on the day of his obit, besides a pound of dates, a pound of figs and a pound of raisins to each monk during Lent. Heavier fare is indicated in a will of 1349, in which a lady

bequeathed a coat, a hood and a gammon of bacon to a woman friend, and to the Vicar of Isleworth a quarter of malt, half a quarter of corn, a gammon, a quarter of beef, a tablecloth, a towel and a napkin.

The will of the above-mentioned William Walman, buried at St. Mary Woolchurch Haw, in which he mentions a drinking-cup known among his family by the pet name of " the brown mazer," affords a picture of homely sentiment which, bridging the centuries, brings the domestic lives of our ancestors very close to our own. This habit of bestowing individual names upon the household gods, the familiar domestic objects or keep-sakes of the family, is perhaps not altogether absent from English homes to-day, even if in most instances it is now almost confined to the nursery.[1]

Further illustrations of this habit of mind found in the London wills are even more apt in their choice of names than was William Walman's. A chandler living in the parish of St. Benet, Gracechurch Street, possessed a mazer cup and a son both nicknamed " Montague." The family name was Hatfield, and the son's name John. Another citizen had a cup named " God morwe," or good-morning, while even the Bishop of London had one which he fondly called " Katharine." Most of these pet names refer to drinking-cups, objects which were in daily use in the household, and among them are found " Grandan," " Pardoncuppe," " Cokille," " Peregryn," the curious one of " Note in Christmasse," or the Christmas nut, which was most likely a cocoanut

[1] In this connection the present writer knew a family of children who among all their innumerable toys had one favourite ball, large and soft and painted, which was never mentioned among them by any other name than "The Bouncing Bee," and perhaps other examples of the kind will occur to the reader.

cup, "The Horse," and a pair of cups called "Bride and Balloc."

The records of St. Mary Woolchurch Haw are historically interesting in another way, for they show how some City churches were, at any rate for a time, able to escape the general destruction which took place at the Reformation, only to fall victims later on to the iconoclasm of the Puritans. Whereas from most of the churches the altars, tombs and images were pulled down and cast out at that time, we find the church of St. Mary still in possession of images of the Virgin Mary and angels, besides others, as late as 1643. But by the 17th century the spread of Puritanism gradually destroyed whatever the Reformation had passed over. Its growth can be observed in the supervision exercised over the religious observances of the parishioners. In 1606–7 the churchwardens had to certify that all the parishioners had received Holy Communion at Easter. Even before this, in 1593, a man who did not "catechise" on the Sabbath had to be reported to the Chancellor of the Bishop of London, and in 1590 a man and a woman did penance for opening their windows on Sunday. In 1643 the old images were removed and altered into "another decent shape"; the "superstitious" inscriptions on the brasses in the church were rubbed out and new ones engraved in their place. Those which were considered too bad were taken away altogether, involving the removal of seventy-seven pounds of brass. In the following year is an entry of a shilling paid to an officer who brought an order to demolish "the cross and other superstitious things about or in the church," and the trend of all this is seen in the same year, when they were compelled to furnish the Parliament at Westminster

with a list of those in the parish who refused to take the Solemn League and Covenant.

It would be a mistake to imagine that thought and opinion were any more free after the Reformation than before, or that the laws governing religious observance were any more lax ; it was only that the penalty for infringement was lighter, for while the Catholics would burn dissentients at the stake, Protestants would hang them if they were priests, or give them a public whipping if they were laymen. In 1430 a man was burnt on Tower Hill for no worse offence than eating meat on Fridays, whereas in 1563 for a similar offence four women were set in the stocks and kept there all night until their husbands fetched them home in the morning.

In 1560 Queen Elizabeth and her Council issued a proclamation that no person should eat meat in Lent or on other fast days appointed by the Church, that no eating-house keeper should serve any meat, and that no butcher should slaughter any animal for food. Anyone transgressing this order was to be subjected to a heavy fine, or else suffer six hours in the pillory and ten days' imprisonment. At the beginning of Lent in the following year, in pursuance of this order, a butcher of Eastcheap was fined £20 for slaughtering three oxen, but nevertheless a butcher could obtain a licence to kill in Lent for the convenience of those who had been accorded exemption from the law. Such exemption could be purchased for 6s. 8d.

There were three houses adjoining the church of St. Mary Woolchurch Haw which were the property of the parish, and after the Great Fire of 1666 the space they had occupied was also taken over for the extension of the Stocks Market, £350 compensation being paid

by the Corporation. A curious contrast is met with between the names of houses in the earlier and later periods, illustrating the development of taste in this respect. The earliest house-name in the parish of St. Mary is found in 1296, and consists of the simple word "Snores," and by the 14th and 15th centuries most of them are a combination of some common object and a hoop, such as the Swan in the Hoop and the Cock in the Hoop. This was the favourite form of house-sign at the time, and led to many forms found all over the City, such as the Star, Maiden, Scot, Welshman, Peacock, etc., all "in the Hoop," and the origin of it is not far to seek. At a time when in the absence of numbering the only way in which to distinguish a house was to hang out a sign by which it should be known, the easiest object to suspend was a round iron hoop in which the sign could be mounted. One of these—the Cock in the Hoop—became so familiar as to give rise to a popular saying which is still extant—cock-a-hoop ; no better embodiment of the spirit of aggression could be desired than a cock perched upon the lower rim of the hoop raising its head and throat in the act of crowing.

Coming to the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, we find this type of name entirely disappeared, giving place to the George, the Anchor, the Baytree, the Fountain, the Bell, etc.

The Great Plague of 1665 is said to have started in this parish, in Bearbinder Lane, an ancient lane first met with in 1285 under the name of Beremanelane, now represented by George Street, which runs from the back of the Mansion House to St. Swithin's Lane. The affair is mentioned in the churchwardens' accounts of St. Mary Woolchurch Haw under the year 1665, when 10s.

was paid to Mr. Upton, master of the Pest House, for coming twice to Bearbinder Lane to view the dead bodies of two boys. A further entry is for 6s. paid for taking three persons to the Pest House, the ignorance of the methods by which infection is spread characteristic of the time being indicated by a note to the effect that one of the victims was conveyed to his destination in a sedan chair.

After the Great Fire the site of St. Mary Woolchurch Haw and the space in front of it were occupied by the extended Stocks Market for about 150 years, when it was resolved to clear it entirely away, remove the market to Farringdon Street, and build an official residence for the Lord Mayor on the site of the old church. The foundation was dug in 1739, and the building completed in 1753, in which year it was occupied by the Lord Mayor, Sir Crisp Gascoigne, for the first time.

In early times the Mayor, who was usually a man of considerable wealth, used his own house as an official residence for his year. After the Great Fire, Sir Robert Vyner, goldsmith, Lord Mayor in 1674–5, built a fine house in Lombard Street for his mayoralty, with the idea, it is said, that it should be regularly used for this purpose, but a few years later it became the General Post Office of London. Another famous house for the residence of the Mayors before the Mansion House was built was No. 73, Cheapside, until recently occupied for many years by Messrs. Elkington, above whose shop the old curiously carved stone front may still be seen.

CHAPTER XVI

MARK LANE

THE delightful names attaching to the streets of Old London may be divided roughly into three classes—those which bear their meaning plain upon their faces for all to see, such as Milk Street and Bread Street ; those which, although corrupted forms, only thinly veil their original significance, such as Foster Lane and Sise Lane ; and others like Aldgate or Mark Lane, which, seemingly plain and easy to understand, are in reality so obscure that they become matters of high debate between rival antiquaries. The last mentioned, indeed, is a trap for the unwary, and a warning not to accept a too obvious derivation at its face value. Stow, discussing the origin of Mark Lane, says : " Mart Lane, so-called of a privilege sometime enjoined to keep a mart there, long since discontinued, and therefore forgotten, so as nothing remaineth for memory but the name of Mart Lane, and that corruptly termed Marke Lane." It is true that in early times this street was called Mart or Marthe Lane, but it is also true that there is no record of a market ever having been held there. Another objection which has been lodged against the derivation concerns the late introduction into the language of the word " mart " as a diminutive of " market." There is an Old English word " mart " with the meaning of an ox fattened for slaughter, but the difficulty of accepting such an explanation is just as great, for it would almost certainly presuppose a cattle market, of which there is no evidence.

We may perhaps see an analogous form of the name in Bevis Marks, which is not very far away from Mark Lane. This was originally Buries Markes, meaning the Court of the Abbots of Bury (Bury St. Edmunds), and here we have what appears to be a transposition of ideas by which the word *mark* or *mearc*, the Old English word for a boundary or limit, came to be used for the property itself within the boundary or limit. Perhaps it would be more correct to put it in a different way—that it was rather the jurisdiction exercised within the limit which became known as the *mark* or *mearc*, so that Buries Markes would really signify the local territory over which the Abbot held jurisdiction.

If we apply the same process to Mark Lane, we find that there was indeed a court there, and a very important one—the manor of Blanchappleton—through the centre of the early confines of which it ran. Blanchappleton in early Norman times lay on either side of Mark Lane, with its northern boundary fronting Fenchurch Street. In those times it was the property of the Bohuns, Earls of Hereford, and in it was held the manorial court of no less than seven manors, those of North Mymmes, South Mymmes, Bushey, Hinxworth, Enfield, Clapham and Carshalton.[1] If this derivation is correct, Mark Lane is the lane of the manor or court of Blanchappleton.

Another possible but less probable derivation of the name is from the Danish word *mark*, a field. In Saxon times all this district was known as Weremanesacre, a term which has been thought to denote the warriors' acre, or the land allotted to the knights whose duty it was to defend Aldgate, the east gate of the City, which

[1] *London: Its Origin and Early Development*, by W. Page, p. 152.

would be the principal point of attack by invaders advancing through the Eastern Counties. This would make Mark Lane equivalent to the lane running through the (warriors') field.

All the possibilities are not yet exhausted, for there is the dialect word *mark*, equivalent to *merke* or *murke*, meaning dark, which would give us the dark lane ; and again, the Old English *mersc*, a marsh, which in an example from Yorkshire has become Marske.

However this may be, and whether Stow be right or wrong in his attribution of Mark Lane as the site of an ancient market, there is no question that it is a market to-day, and the chief wonder to be beheld there is the apparent indifference to its possibilities on the part of those who inhabit it during the daytime. For to the innocent stranger with no personal interest in wine, corn or coal, wandering down its narrow and crowded course, it seems to contain all the elements which make for romance. Its houses exhibit enough different types of architecture to fill a book, and if the modern craze to pull down everything and rebuild it on gigantic scale will but leave Mark Lane severely alone for another hundred years, it will become one of the quaintest spots in London.

The space, no inconsiderable one, between Mark Lane and the next turning, Mincing Lane, is a gigantic rabbit-warren of offices and interminable corridors, from which during the busy hours of the day crowds of men with tense faces continually rush across to the warehouses and damp-smelling wine vaults on the opposite side of the way. A peep through the windows of the Corn Exchange will reveal knots of people deep in conversation or intently examining samples of grain.

Even on the pavement outside is usually to be seen at least one individual with both hands extended and filled with corn, which his companion anxiously turns over grain by grain with one finger. The coal merchant's office at the southern end exhibits a comparatively calm and dignified aspect, perhaps because its products are not so convenient to handle as those of its neighbours.

The first or Old Corn Exchange was erected in 1747, and the New Corn Exchange in 1827. The last-named is built on the site of a house which in 1620 belonged to William Sebright, Town Clerk of London, and which he left towards the support of the poor of several country parishes and for the foundation of a Free Grammar School at Wolverley in Worcestershire. At the same end of the lane, on the west side, was in the 14th century a great house known as "Blakelofte," belonging to Peter de Blakeney, a Sheriff of London. It may be the same as the "great mansion" we read of in 1281 which a certain Ralph de la More, an owner of considerable property in Mark Lane, left to his eldest son. A little farther down on the same side, on the corner of Mark Lane and Tower Street, was another great mansion of the middle ages known as Cokedon Hall. Allowing for the fact that Great Tower Street was considerably widened in the last century, its position would be just beyond the present offices of the Royal Insurance Company.

In the middle ages Mark Lane was not one of the most famous of London streets, such as were Cheapside or Cornhill, and yet it is possible to glean from the records of the City certain references to its inhabitants which are not altogether devoid of interest. Mention is first found of it in 1240 under the name of Marthe

Lane, and towards the end of the 13th century it appears to have been occupied principally by challoners, or makers of blankets, and tapicers, workers in tapestry and the carpets of the period. In 1276 we hear of one of these challoners to whose house a fellow-craftsman was brought after being mortally wounded in a neighbouring tavern. The entry suggests that at the time the north end of the lane and into Fenchurch Street was a colony of challoners, for the trouble which resulted in this tragedy started in the house of another of the same trade near the church, now demolished, of St. Gabriel Fancherche.

Towards the end of the 14th century, no more being heard of either challoners or tapicers, hurers are found living there. In 1396 one of them left his shops in Mark Lane to be ultimately sold and the proceeds devoted to poor bedridden people, the repair of roads, and the release of prisoners. The last-named purpose is a reminder of the difficulty of getting out of prison in the middle ages, in striking contrast to the ease of getting in. Many people remained there simply because they could not afford the fees payable on discharge. In 1364 there is record of a hurer with a tenement and garden in Mark Lane, but at that time all the houses would be provided with gardens like a suburban road of to-day.

In the next century a girdler is found living in Mark Lane, who, dying in 1447, left money for the purpose of distributing a hundred quarters of coal every winter among the poor of the parish of Allhallows Staining, each man or woman receiving a bushel a week. Although Mark Lane is now full of wine merchants, the first vintner we find with his mansion there is in 1594. This was Sir Cuthbert Buckle, a Lord Mayor who died during

his term of office. A record of the inevitable brewery in Mark Lane exists as early as 1319. It was near Hart Street, and was let to a fishmonger and his wife for the term of their lives at a rent of 18s. a year. Other house values in the lane were on a similar scale. In 1299 two shops there produced 14s. a year, and in 1305 a house was sold for 10 marks, or £6 13s. 4d.

Mark Lane is situated in two wards—Tower Ward and Aldgate Ward—and Stow relates that to indicate where one began and the other ended a chain used to be drawn across the lane just to the north of Hart Street. But perhaps the most curious sight ever seen there is that recorded by Mr. Pepys on St. David's Day, March 1, 1667, when he saw outside the house of a merchant a full-sized effigy of a Welshman hanging by the neck. He describes it as one of the oddest sights he had ever seen, it so closely resembled a man. The same diarist relates how on a day in 1663 he dined in the house of his friend Captain Allen in Mark Lane, a pretty little house, but so smoky that it was troublesome to them all until they put out the fire and made another of charcoal instead. Here he had a good plain dinner, and was afterwards so regaled with good stories that he stayed until nightfall.

Mark Lane is one of those long lanes which have very few turnings. There are only Hart Street, with its beautiful old church of St. Olave, and London Street, leading to Fenchurch Street Station. The last-mentioned is named after John London, Warden of the Ironmongers' Company in 1724. Just round the corner in Hart Street, four doors from Mark Lane, existed in 1796 an old house known as Whittington Palace, and so named in old leases, though it appears to have had no actual

connection with the great Lord Mayor. Beneath the windows of the first story were carved the arms of the twelve livery companies. The principal room, which was very large—25 feet long, 15 broad, and 10 high—had an elegantly carved ceiling and a carved wainscot 6 feet high, above which were Saxon arches, and between each of them a human figure.

In the 18th century there was a turning out of Mark Lane between London Street and Fenchurch Street known as Blind Chapel Court, but now built over with offices. This was the last vestige of the manor of Blanchappleton, and the last corruption of its ancient name. Originally this famous bit of Old London occupied both sides of Mark Lane, but during the greater part of the middle ages it was restricted to the north-east corner. The holding of the manorial courts there, as mentioned above, made it a place of privilege, so that by the 15th century it became the resort of "foreign" craftsmen—basket-makers, wiredrawers, and such-like—where they were able to pursue their callings without interference by the authorities of the City. In 1463 the Common Council ordered all such foreign craftsmen to close their shops in other parts of London and go to live at Blanchappleton, or else to quit the City. Those with shops below the yearly value of 40s. were to go before Christmas, but those with shops above that value were granted an extension until the following Easter.

By reason of this exclusiveness Blanchappleton rapidly became a sort of Alsatia, the resort of bad characters of all descriptions. In 1451 a petition of the Cordwainers addressed to the Mayor complains that apprentices who had served their time and were unable to make a living at their trade resorted there out of the jurisdiction of

the Wardens of the Cordwainers, with the result that they became "common vagrants, rioters, strumpet-mongers and thieves," who were "an evil example of all the young people of this City."

In the early 16th century Blanchappleton and St. Martin le Grand were the two chief settlements of these foreign craftsmen, and both places were sufferers from the riot of apprentices in 1517 known as Evil May Day. This was the most famous of all the riots directed against the foreign element in London. It started in the evening of May Day in 1517, when, after a meeting at Guildhall, at which the rumours of disturbances in the City had been discussed, Sir John Mundy, an Alderman, passing through Chepe, found two young men there fencing with swords and bucklers with a crowd looking on. On being ordered to desist from their play, one of them demanded of the Alderman the reason why, for which impertinence he was arrested and taken to the Compter. This was the signal for raising the cry of "Prentices and clubs," and from every direction crowds of apprentices armed with clubs streamed into Chepe until seven hundred had collected, who were joined later by a further contingent of three hundred coming through St. Paul's Churchyard. They then proceeded to break open the Compters and release the prisoners, after which they took their way to St. Martin le Grand to demonstrate against the foreign workmen harboured there. On being addressed by Sir Thomas More, they would then most probably have dispersed, if some of the inmates of St. Martin's had not pelted them with stones and brickbats. This caused the exasperated crowd to loot the sanctuary, and then, roused to fury by the excitement of the fray, they marched through Cornhill and Lombard Street, attacking the

houses of foreigners on their way, and finished up with the sack of Blanchappleton. Order was at length restored by the entry into London of several contingents of troops, who arrested three hundred of the rioters, of whom thirteen were eventually hanged on gallows, which were wheeled through the streets as a warning to the populace.

Towards the end of the 16th century Alderman Sir Henry Billingsley, Lord Mayor in 1596, and the first translator of Euclid into English, lived at Blanchappleton. He was a haberdasher by trade, and acted as a farmer of the Customs in the Port of London. In 1636 the name was corrupted to Blaunch Chappleton, at which time it was in the possession of William Benham, a vintner.

On the opposite side of Mark Lane the little courtway known as Star Alley is first heard of in 1310, at which time it appears to be numbered among those City lanes which had not yet achieved the distinction of a name. In that year it is found in a deed granting 40s. quit-rent of a tenement between "Martelane towards the east, and a little lane which leads to the said church (All-hallows) towards the west." In 1447 there is a reference to a lane called "le Peynted Alley" in the parish, which from its situation may be the same as our Star Alley.

Stow suggests that the name of Allhallows Staining, which in the middle ages fronted Mark Lane, may be derived from the fact that it was built of stone at a time when most other churches were of timber. In 1663 the impropriation of the living of the church was purchased by the Company of Grocers for £650, its value then being £55 per annum. It escaped the Great Fire of 1666, but fell down in 1671, and was rebuilt about 1683. In the meantime the parish services were held in Ironmongers' Hall in Fenchurch Street, at that time a splendid

Elizabethan building. It again fell down in 1761, was rebuilt, and finally pulled down in 1870, the tower, which is medieval work, remaining to this day, standing in forlorn splendour in the midst of its green churchyard. The site is now the property of the Company of Clothworkers, whose hall stands just beside it, fronting Mincing Lane.

In the churchyard is a vault entered by a flight of steps and containing an ancient monument recalling memories of the most peculiar religious establishment of medieval London. The custodian of the place takes pleasure in introducing visitors to this relic, which consists of Norman columns and arches decorated with the characteristic dog-tooth ornament. It was removed here from the hermitage of St. James in the Wall, formerly existing at the north-west end of Monkwell Street, Cripplegate.

The hermitage was built sometime in the 12th century in an angle of the wall of the City ; Monkwell Street itself probably takes its name from the well beneath its crypt. Doubtless it started as the home of a single anchorite, but was enlarged about 1290, and the number of its occupants increased. Although more than one anchorite in a hermitage seems a contradiction in terms, this was permitted by the Church, providing they occupied separate cells.

Unlike any other hermitage in London, it contained chantries with priests to celebrate in them. One of these was founded by the Countess of Pembroke in memory of her husband, Aymer de Valence, who was killed in a tournament on their wedding-day in 1323. Stow says there were two of these chantries with their priests besides the hermit, but a reference in 1348 to the " Abbot and hermits of the hermitage within Cripplegate " would

seem to indicate a much larger establishment. This, however, may refer to the Abbot of Garendon in Leicestershire, of whose monastery this was a cell, and who had the right to nominate the chantry priest.

The first hermit whose name has come down to us was Friar Robert, or, as he is called in a charter of Edward I, Robert of St. Laurence, who lived there in 1289. A reference to the hermit in 1311 records that he took upon himself to issue indulgences for five hundred days to all and sundry until he was threatened with excommunication by the Bishop of London. In 1399 John de Rither, a monk of Garendon, was appointed the Countess of Pembroke's chantry priest.

Except for ordinary ankerholds containing a single hermit, St. James in the Wall was the smallest religious establishment in the City, and in 1412 possessed a rental value of 13s. 4d. a year. At the same time the greatest ecclesiastical proprietor in London was the Archbishop of York, with a rent-roll of £10 13s. 4d. a year, while the total annual value of the City was £4,220, in the ownership of 1,132 individuals and institutions.

St. James in the Wall was confiscated at the Reformation and its inmates turned out. In 1543 William Lamb, a wealthy clothworker, bought it from the King. Dying in 1577, he left it with money for its endowment to the Clothworkers' Company, from which circumstance it became known as Lamb's Chapel, and so remained until the 19th century. Under Lamb's will four sermons were preached annually to the members of the Company, at which the Master, Wardens and Liverymen attended in their gowns and money and clothing were bestowed upon the poor. At this period the chapel was furnished with a Communion table, pulpit and font, with seats and benches for the accommodation of the members of the

Company and the almsmen and almswomen. Its walls were adorned with a portrait of Moses holding the tables of the Law, and paintings on glass representing St. Peter, St. Matthew, St. Matthias and St. James the Apostle.

When it was repaired in 1825 the Norman crypt was brought to light. It was then a low-roofed chamber, supported by nine short columns, approached by a narrow flight of ten to twelve steps. It was strengthened and left in its original position until 1873, when the whole structure was removed and transferred by the Clothworkers' Company to the specially prepared vault in the churchyard of Allhallows Staining.

Among the wills of Old Londoners we find many examples of money left to the church of Allhallows, or to the poor of the parish, and a frequent object of such bequests was the maintenance of the church lights. Besides the great Rood, with its beam of five lights, were images or shrines of St. Katharine and St. Nicholas, the illumination of which was a call on the generosity of the parishioners. Others subscribed towards maintaining the special lights at Easter—the Paschal candle and the Sepulchre candles—when the death and resurrection of the Saviour were celebrated in realistic fashion ; yet another bequest is to provide twenty-four torches to accompany the Sacrament round the parish on Corpus Christi Day.

In ancient wills there usually seems to be a personal element which lets us into some of the secrets of the testator's disposition. Thus the brooding nature is indicated by the will of Hugh de Waltham, Town Clerk of London, who died in 1335. He was the owner of the advowson of Allhallows Staining, and in bequeathing it to his son gives way to the doleful reflection that he leaves his " vile body to earth and worms." An equal

mixture of piety and charity is exhibited by another parishioner, a challoner, who in 1372 bequeathed a sum of money for the purchase of woollen cloth, white and russet, to cover his corpse at the funeral, and afterwards to be distributed among the poor. A more convivial nature was displayed by Raphe Handson, an ironmonger, who in 1654 left an annual sum of 50s. to the churchwardens with which to buy themselves a dinner each year on the anniversary of his death, besides another 20s. to be distributed in bread among the poor on the same day.

Another great benefactor to the church was John Costin, a girdler, and in gratitude they painted his name in the roof. Stow, referring to the spoliation of the parish churches at the Reformation, when everything of value was seized for the King, says : " If it had been set in brass it would have been fetched down."

On May 19, 1554, Princess Elizabeth came to this church to pay her devotions after her release from the Tower, and afterwards went to dine at the King's Head in Fenchurch Street, now the London Tavern at the corner of Mark Lane, the landlord of which used to show a metal dish and cover used on the occasion. The premises now the London Tavern appear to have been devoted to the provision of good cheer from quite early times. In 1394 we find the site occupied by a brewery and a bakehouse, with houses built over them.

Notwithstanding the few gleanings from Mark Lane with which the records can supply us, the fact remains that no stirring events can be predicated of it in the middle ages, few remarkable buildings, and not even the hall of a single company, nothing, indeed, so interesting or picturesque as its present-day aspect, and so, as good John Stow would say—thus much of Mark Lane.

INDEX

Abuse, 7
Albin, John, 94
Aldermanbury, 169, 198
Aldermen, 8, 40, 202
Aldersgate, 197
Aldgate, 27, 30–44, 145, 205
Ale, 165
Allhallows, Grascherche, 102, 116
Allhallows the Great, 130
Allhallows, London Wall, 175, 205, 214
Allhallows Staining, 46, 242, 246–250
Almshouses, 211
Amen Court, 207
Anchorites, 213
Anchor Lane, 62
Andover Seld, 130
Anne Boleyn, 6
Apprentices, 90, 155, 186, 244
Archery, 193
Arnseld, 124
Arraces Seld, 127
Assault, in an inn, 115; on the beadle of Bread Street Ward, 154; at Ludgate, 162; on the Watch, 188; at St. Mary Woolchurch Haw, 231
Assheton, John, 37
Audley, Sir Thomas, 41
Austin Friars, 161, 194

Bakers, 21, 22, 23
Bakwell Hall, 134, 136, 137, 138, 198
Balliol College, Oxford, 198
Banquelle, John de, 136
Barnes's Chest, 47
Bartholomew Fair, 226, 227
Bartholomew's Hospital, 49
Basinges, Sir Thomas de, 71
Basinghall Street, 136
Baths, 65, 66
Baynard's Castle, 100
Bearbinder Lane, 236
Beer, 91
Bell Founders, 35
Bellringing, 52, 53
Bell Yard, 115
Bequests, curious, 232
Bermondsey, 144
Bernseld, 124
Bevis Marks, 145, 239
Billingsgate, 31, 32, 57, 90, 104
Billingsley, Sir Henry, 246
Billiter Street, 35
Bishopsgate Street, 139, 160, 171 173, 192, 194, 210, 227
Blackfriars, 6, 87, 194
Bladers, 104
Blanchappleton, 239, 244–246
Blankets, 242
Blank money, 108
Blossoms Inn, 137
Blund, John le, 131, 227
Boar's Head in Chepe, 16
Boiling to death, 18
Botcher, 9
Bougets, 163
Bow Lane, 150–158, 206
Brantefeldseld, 127
Bread from Stratford, 31
Bread Street, 17
Bread Street Compter, 171
Breweries, 28, 103, 243, 250
Bribery, 76, 77
Bridges over Walbrook, 178–179, 180
Broadseld, 131, 134
Broad Street, 194, 210
Broderers, 53
Brokenseld, 123
Brokenwharf, 63, 165
Brokers, 120
Brokesheved, Geoffrey, 24
Brokyncross, 167
Buckle, Sir Cuthbert, 242
Bucklersbury, 176, 179, 180, 225, 229
Budge Row, 29, 162, 183
Buke, John, 103

Bull in Chepe, 232
Burial, 51, 52
Burillers, 25, 26
Burley, Simon, 202
Bury, Blase de, 186
Butchers, 223, 224, 235
Butter, 43, 217, 230

Cade, Jack, 27
Camomile Street, 146
Candles, 23, 24, 225
Candlewyck Street, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 196
" Capitular " brothers, 79
Carfax, 31, 95, 164, 168, 208–221
Carmelites, 194
Cauntebrigge, Thomas de, 211
Causton, John de, 75
Causton, William de, 134
Caxton, William, 26
Challoners, 242, 250
Chantries, 26, 73, 103, 156, 247
Charcoal, 88, 91
Charing Cross, 7, 169, 170
Charnel houses, 51, 210
Charterhouse, 192, 232
Chaucer, Geoffrey, 34
Cheapside, 6, 22, 31, 46, 95, 122, 123, 124, 131, 165, 204, 226, 237, 245
Cheese, 217, 230
Chichley, Robert, 185
Christmas, 188
Churchman, John, 228
Churchyards, 200, 226
Clarks Place, 81
Clement's Lane, 19
Clerkenwell, 163
Cloak Lane, 177, 183
Cloth, 25, 26, 136, 137, 224
Clothworkers' Hall, 247
Coal, 88
Cobblers, 151
Cock-a-hoop, 236
Cockney, 17
Cokedon Hall, 241
Coleman Street, 175, 194
Common Hunt, 141
Common Seld, 135, 137
Compters, 90, 93, 124, 245
Conduit in Chepe, 166
Conyhope Lane, 196
Cooks, 17
Cordwainers, 151 ff., 244
Cordwainers' Hall, 157
Cordwainery in Chepe, 155
Cornet's Tower, 229
Corn Exchange, 241
Cornhill, 126, 148, 183, 196, 201, 204, 211, 215, 245
Cornmeters, 57
Coronation, 6
Corpus Christi, 249
Costin, John, 250
Cousin Lane, 164
Covent Garden, 170
Coventre, Rohesia de, 131
Creechurch Lane, 6, 41
Crepin, Edmund, 210
Cripplegate, 169
Crocards and Pollards, 109
Cromwell, Thomas, 194
Crooked Lane, 16, 17
Crosby, Sir John, 84
Cross Keys in Gracechurch Street, 114
Crownselde, 124
Crutched Friars, 194, 205
Curfew, 33
Cutlery, 137

Darkhouse Lane, 65
Disorderly Houses, 42, 66
Doghouse in Moorfields, 141
Dowgate Dock, 163, 164, 176
Dowgate Hill, 181, 183
Drake, Francis, 187
Draper, John, 182
Drapers, 24, 27, 28
Drapers' Gardens, 195, 206
Drapers' Hall, 28, 195
Duke Street, Aldgate, 6, 31, 41
Duke's Place, 41
Dutch Church in Austin Friars, 194
Dyers' Hall, 183

Eastcheap, 17, 18, 235
Eastfield, Sir William, 168, 169
Education, popular, the dawn of, 200
Edward II, 6
Eggs, 217
Elizabeth, Queen, 46, 53, 250
Elsing Spital, 49

Ely Place, 76, 99, 191
" Englishoundes," 126
Erber, the, 187, 228
Essex House, Strand, 172
Evil May Day, 245

Falcon Square, 197
Fanmakers, 160
Fenchurch Avenue, 196
Fenchurch Street, 242, 246
Fires of London, 27, 40
Fishmonger Alley, 196
Fishmongers, 60, 61, 196, 223
Fishmongers' Procession, 212
Fishwharf, 58, 60, 61
Fitz Aylwin, Henry, 27
Fitzwalter, Lord, 196
Flats, 201
Fleetbridge, 31, 87, 88
Fleet Lane Bridge, 88
Fleet Market, 101
Fleet Prison, 89, 93
Fleet River, 86–101
Fleet Street, 88, 165, 168, 171
Flete, John de, 95
Foreign Merchants, 118, 204, 209, 226, 244
Forestalling, 106
Forgery, 43
Forster, Richard, 34
Fortescue, Sir John, 170
Foster Lane, 96
Foundlings, 98
Fraunceys, Adam, 73, 83, 211
Freedom of London, 117
Friday Street, 127, 128
Fripperers, 7, 147
Fruiterers, 203, 204
Fullers' Hall, 219
Funerals, 83

Galeys, Henry de, 80, 166, 223
Gaming Houses, 199
Gardeners' Company, 202
Gardens, 157, 190–207
Garlickhithe, 58, 211
General Processions, 83
George Yard, 114
Girdlers, 154, 160, 242
Girdlersselde, 124
Gisors Hall, 180, 181
Gisors, John de, 73
Godchepselde, 124, 133
God's Penny, 114
Goldsmiths' Company, 197
Goods, false, burnt in streets, 95, 151
Gracechurch Street, 169, 188, 208
Grascherche Market, 102–116
Grave-digging, 51
Great Beam, 34, 187, 218, 225, 226–229
Gresham House, 196
Gresham, Sir Thomas, 83
Grey Friars, 194
Grocers, 180, 225, 229, 246
Grocers' Hall, 196, 206
Grub Street, 162
Guildhall, 90, 173, 224
Guildhall Chapel, 80–82
Guildhall Garden, 197

Hair standing on end, 8
Hart Street, 243
Haywharf, 87
Hearse, 53
Henry III, 6, 38, 162
Hermitage, 39
Hill, Thomas, 169
Holborn, 191
Holborn Bridge, 86, 87, 99
Holegh, John de, 156
Holy Trinity, Priory of, 6, 40–41, 175, 194
Holy-water stock, 161
Horsebread, 22, 107, 121
Horseshoe Bridge, 177, 179
Hosiers, 155
Hostelers, 119, 120, 167
Houndsditch, 31, 139–149, 190, 192
House-building, 60, 135
House-names, 189, 236
Hunting, 170, 193
Hurdle, 22
Hures, 95, 242
Hurlings, 125
Hyde Park, 169

Imagour, 38
Ingham, Sir Oliver de, 211
Innholders, 121, 167
Ironmonger Lane, 127, 204
Ironmongers' Hall, 246

James I, 35
Jesus' Bells, 79
Jesus' Brotherhood, 78
Jewin Street, 197
Jewry Street, 31, 36
Jews, 36, 109
Jews' Garden, 197
Jews' Synagogue, 196
Joslyn, Rauf, 144
Judd, Sir Andrew, 83, 115

Keleseye, John de, 157
Kelseye, Robert de, 128
Knesworth, Thomas, 171
Knight, Richard, 196
Knightenguild, 40

Lamb's Chapel, 248
Lauendresbrigge, 65
Lawrence Lane, 137
Laystalls, 64
Lead, 20, 137
Leadenhall, 107, 136, 137, 138, 202, 209, 215–221, 229
Leadenhall Street, 194
Leather, 135, 137, 151, 154
Leathersellers' Hall, 71, 195
Legal Proceedings, 76
Lent, 235
Lime Street, 202, 219
Lincoln's Inn, 191
" littellondon," 175
" Little Ease," 90
Little Trinity Lane, 39
" Loge," at Aldgate, 33
Lombard Merchants, 126
Lombard Street, 102, 237, 245
London Bridge, 164, 188, 223
London Stone, 26, 27
London Street, 243
London Tavern, 250
London Wall, 142, 144, 171, 175, 194
Lord Mayor's Show, 6
Lothbury, 194
Love-day, 231
Lovekyn, Adam, 128
Lovekyn, John, 16, 223
Lucas, William, 214
Ludgate Prison, 90, 143, 162
Lussheboroughs, 109
Lydgate, 18, 147, 148

Mansion House, 179, 222–237
Market Tolls, 104
Mark Lane, 238-250
Marylebone, 169, 170
Mazers, 233
Meat, 219
Mercers, 118, 125, 131, 134
Merchant Tailors' Company, 211
Merchant Tailors' Hall, 196, 211
Middleton, Sir Hugh, 173
Mile End, 32
Minories, 39, 137, 145, 205
Money, difficulties of, 108–112
Monkwell Street, 247
Moorfields, 145, 174, 178, 193
Moorgate, 193
More, Sir Thomas, 245
Morice, Peter, 164
Musical instruments, 7, 22, 42

Nails, 135, 137
Napkins, 6
Neville, John de, 197
New Court, Bow Lane, 206
New Court, St. Swithin's Lane, 206
Newgate Prison, 90, 91, 162
Newgate Street, 8, 39, 104
New River, 173
Nicholas Lane, 25
Night life, 187-188
Noble Street, 48, 196
Norfolk, Duke of, 41
Northumberland House, 199

Old Barge, 180
Old Fish Street, 60, 165
Oo, Thomas, 186
Orchards, 202, 204
Oynters, 122
Oysters, 62, 63

Paddington, springs at, 169, 170
Painted Seld, 131, 133
Painter Stainers, 37, 38
Pancras Lane, 47
Pappychurch, 146
Parish Clerks, 81, 82, 99
Parish Priests, fraternity of, 78
Paschal Candle, 24, 249
Paulet, Sir William, 194
Paving, 69, 70

Paving-tiles, 60
Pesage, 21, 34
Peter the Taverner, 113
Philpot, Sir John, 50
Piecework, 154
Pies, 18
Pilgrimages, 156
Pillory, 42, 77
Plague, 114, 236
Plumbers, 20, 21
Plumer, 28
Portsoken, 40
Poulterers, 209
Poultry, 216
Poultry, the, 196, 216
Prices, comparative, 112
Primrose Street, 193
Princes Street, 175, 206
Prisoners: begging in streets, 92; discharge of, 92
Prisons, 90–94
Pui, Society of, 79
Pulteney, Sir John, 56
Punishment for interfering with water supply, 172
Pyx, 74–5

Queenhithe, 31, 55–68, 104

Randolph, Barnard, 165
Rectory as investment, 198
Reformation, 200, 201, 234, 250
Religious observance, 234
Rent, 33, 34, 205, 243; red rose as, 213
Rither, John de, 248
Romeland, 59, 63, 64
Romford, Bailiff of, 40
" Rorers," 188
Rushes, 59, 60
Ryche, Richard, 194

St. Alphage, 48
St. Andrew's House, 207
St. Antholin, 136, 162
St. Anthony's, Threadneedle Street, 36
St. Augustine on the Wall, 146
St. Benet Sherehog, 47, 48
St. Botolph, Aldgate, 23
St. Bride, Fleet Street, 168, 210
St. Christopher le Stocks, 48
St. Clement, Eastcheap, 19, 23
St. Ethelburga, 194
St. Giles in the Fields, 170, 193
St. Helen, 69–85, 194
St. Helen's Place, 71
St. James in the Wall, 247
St. John upon Walbrook, 181–183, 184
St. Katharine Cree, 42
St. Laurence, Robert of, 248
St. Lawrence Jewry, 78, 198
St. Magnus, 78, 164, 212
St. Margaret, Lothbury, 171, 175, 177
St. Martin le Grand, 33, 79, 155, 176, 245
St. Martin Oteswich, 146, 147, 161, 211
St. Martin Pomery, 204
St. Martin's Seld, 127
St. Mary at Hill, 35, 44, 52, 78, 135, 171, 205
St. Mary Axe, 42, 146, 194
St. Mary Somerset, 46
St. Mary Woolchurch Haw, 130, 223, 225–232, 234
St. Mary le Bow, 125, 156
St. Michael Cornhill, 36, 51, 78, 111, 160, 201
St. Michael Crooked Lane, 16
St. Michael the Archangel, chapel of, 39
St. Mildred, Poultry, 45, 46, 47, 51, 98, 175, 177
St. Nicholas Acons, 25
St. Nicholas Coleabbey, 165, 212
St. Nicholas Shambles, 89, 104, 216
St. Pancras, Soper Lane, 47
St. Paul's, 51, 78, 154, 165, 213
St. Paul's Churchyard, 50
St. Peter, Chepe, 46
St. Peter, Cornhill, 209, 210, 211–214
St. Stephen, Coleman Street, 171
St. Stephen, Walbrook, 179, 185
St. Swithin, 24, 26
St. Swithin's Lane, 26, 206
St. Thomas of Acon, 26, 33, 184
Salters' Hall, 28, 196
Salters' Hall Court, 27
Saltwharf, 59

Sanctuary, 27, 84, 182
Scalding Alley, 47
Seacoal Lane, 66, 88, 89
Sebright, William, 241
Selds, 117–138
Shere Thursday, 72
Shoes, 151–154
Shore, Jane, 116
Sise Lane, 48
Skinners, 29, 182, 184; Hall, 183
Slaughtering, 67, 89
Smithfield, 64, 214
"Snores," 236
Soper Lane, 132, 179
Star Alley, 246
Steelyard, 28, 228
Stew Lane, 59, 65, 66
Stockfish, 62
Stocksmarket, 101, 136, 171, 223–225, 231, 235
Stow, John, 39
Strech, Dame, 28
Surnames, 95–98
Sutton, Thomas, 211
"Swan's Nest," 214

Tallow, 224, 230
Tallow Chandlers, 59, 183, 224
Tankards, 162
Tanneries, 143
Tanners' Seld, 127, 128
Tanners, Society of, 128
Tapestry, 37
Tax-collector, 7
Tenters, 28, 219
Testons, 110, 112
Thames Street, 48, 55, 129
Thorneye, William de, 74
Threadneedle Street, 196, 210, 211
Three Nuns Inn, 37
Tithes, 23
Tombstone, 51
Tower Hill, 205, 235
Tower of London, 145
Tower Street, 95
"Tprhurt," 7
Tredekeiles, 8
Tun in Cornhill, 147, 168
Turnmill Brook, 87, 98
Tyburn, springs at, 166, 169, 170

Undertakers, 53
Unicorn in Chepe, 124
University College, Oxford, 199
Upholders, 53

Vestments, 185
Victuals, application of the word, 108

Wages, 22
Waits of the City, 36, 42, 46
Walbrook, 28, 174–186, 225
Walbrook House, 186
Walworth, John, 168
Walworth, Sir William, 16
Wardon Pie, 203
Wardrobe at Westminster, 6
Washing, 6, 7
Watch, 188
Waterleaders, 163
Wax Chandlers, 23, 24
Weavers, 24, 25, 26, 54
Weigh House: at Aldgate, 34; at Cornhill, 229
Well with two buckets, 161
Whitawyersselde, 127
White Tawyers, 143
Whittington, Richard, 91, 92, 161, 215
Winchester House, 195
Winchester Seld, 129, 130
Wine, 114
Wool, 137, 179, 218, 225–230
Woolchurch Haw, William of, 129, 130, 227
Wool market, 218
Woolquay, or Woolwharf, 134, 228
Wyremongers, 20

Yakesley, John de, 210
Young, Stephen, 24